

# PLANNING FOR A PEACEFUL KOREA

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	
<i>Nicholas Eberstadt</i>	v
Acknowledgements	xi
Introduction	
<i>Henry D. Sokolski</i>	xiii
Chapter 1. Planning for a Peaceful Korea: A Report of the Korea Competitive Strategies Working Group	
<i>Henry D. Sokolski</i>	1
Chapter 2. North Korea's Strategy	
<i>Stephen Bradner</i>	23
Chapter 3. The North Korean View of the Development and Production of Strategic Weapons Systems	
<i>Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., and Sharon A. Richardson</i>	83
Chapter 4. The Last Worst Place on Earth: Human Rights in North Korea	
<i>Jack Rendler</i>	113
Chapter 5. China's Goals and Strategies for the Korean Peninsula	
<i>Eric A. McVadon</i>	131
Chapter 6. China's Goals and Strategies for the Korean Peninsula: A Critical Assessment	
<i>Larry M. Wortzel</i>	215
Chapter 7. Japan's Grand Strategy on the Korean Peninsula: Optimistic Realism	
<i>Victor D. Cha</i>	227
Chapter 8. Economic Alternatives for Unification	
<i>Marcus Noland</i>	267
Chapter 9. Conventional Arms Control in Korea: A Lever for Peace?	
<i>Bruce William Bennett</i>	291
Working Group Participant List	329
About the Contributors	331

## PREFACE

Nicholas Eberstadt

As a new millennium dawns over the Korean peninsula, millenary hopes and expectations are very much in evidence among students of Korean affairs. Half a century after the surprise attack that launched the Korean War, almost 5 decades into the continuing high-tension military standoff that has followed the 1953 Korean War ceasefire, there is suddenly a pervasive and growing anticipation that this tormented and divided nation may now be on the threshold of a new and momentous era: an era of genuine peace, in which the “Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula” is at last dismantled, and a reconciliation between the antagonist governments based in Pyongyang (the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or DPRK) and Seoul (the Republic of Korea, or ROK) commences in earnest.

According to some influential voices in both Korea and the West, in fact, the advent of this remarkable new time for Korea is already at hand—heralded by, and prefigured in, the drama of recent events. In this exegesis, the year 2000 was Korea’s *anno mirabilis*. By this telling, the year was marked by occasion after occasion that would once have been judged impossible by observers of contemporary Korea. After all, the June 2000 Pyongyang summit—the courteous, first-ever meeting between the chiefs of the two Koreas—was extraordinary, and entirely unprecedented. North Korea’s subsequent proposal (first reported by Russia’s president) to shelve its program of ballistic rocket tests if other countries would launch the DPRK’s satellites was, for the DPRK, also unparalleled. The spectacle of North and South Korean soldiers working conjointly (on their respective sides of Korea’s “demilitarized zone”) to reestablish the long-severed rail link between Seoul and Pyongyang—as they were indeed doing later in the year—would have been unthinkable even months before.

And with the Norwegian Nobel Committee's award of the year 2000 Peace Prize to ROK President Kim Dae Jung for his work for "peace and reconciliation with North Korea in particular," respected and far-removed elements of the international community registered their own judgment that something tremendously important and promising was gathering on the Korean peninsula.

To one important contingent of students and statesmen, the notion that contemporary Korea should be heading toward an epoch of peace is entirely unsurprising. Quite the contrary; to them, a peace breakthrough on the Korean peninsula is the natural and perhaps even inevitable consequence of the security policies they have advocated. These are the proponents of what has variously been called the "sunshine" or "engagement" approach to relations with the DPRK—an approach that maintains that it is possible to alter the DPRK's menacing patterns of international behavior, and even the regime's inner character, through positive external inducements and rewards.

Since early 1998, when the Kim Dae Jung government was inaugurated, ROK policy toward the DPRK has incarnated this theory; by 1999, with the coalescence of what came to be known as the "Perry Process," the governments of both Japan and the United States became *de facto* subscribers to the same theory, and joined in the experiment. Engagement theorists, both in the academy and in government, hold that a fundamental change in North Korea's international behavior is in evidence today; that the change is attributable to the approach they champion; and that further salutary changes can be expected the longer and more vigorously their preferred policies are pursued.

What fuels these theorists is easily grasped—when hazard is close by, one should always hope for the best. A generation hence, historians may be better placed to judge the fruits of their theories—and the exertions these theories have occasioned—than are we today. From our present-day

vantage point, however, it may be well to emphasize that the engagement theorists' interpretation of current events in the Korean peninsula is by no means the only one that can be drawn from those events—nor even necessarily the most compelling among competing explanations.

For all the understandable excitement that the recent turn in inter-Korean atmospherics has engendered, this fact remains: that the North Korean government, up to this writing, has taken *no* concrete steps to lessen its conventional, nuclear, and ballistic capabilities to threaten compatriots in the South, or South Korea's allies abroad. And despite the high hopes invested in it by serious people in many countries, the fact remains that the engagement theory is at heart curiously, indeed strikingly, ahistorical. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to offer a single historical example of a situation in which a lasting peace framework has been constructed with a closed, repressive state in the manner that the engagement theory currently proposes to build with the DPRK.

There is, of course, a first time for everything. Millennial thinkers steeped in the Judeo-Christian tradition have always professed that the day will come when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6); but that day, according to their same teachings, will be the final day of human history—when life on earth shall end, and reign of the eternal afterworld shall begin.

Modern-day Korea, to be sure, is hardly the first spot on the globe where messianic notions have been embraced and incorporated into foreign policy. Throughout the ages, statesmen and men of affairs have often been tempted by romantic and even utopian visions in their conduct of international relations. But in the international arena, the pursuit of such temptations has consequences. And unfortunately, the historical record suggests those pursuits have seldom contributed to the security and well-being of the populations in whose name they were undertaken.



Moreover, despite the acclaim (and self-congratulation) that the engagement theory has been accorded in some quarters, there are already signs that the North Korean policies informed by it have begun to sag under the weight of their own internal contradictions. The engagement approach has reached an impasse, for it is now Pyongyang's turn to take steps in the envisioned Korean peace process.

For engagement policy merely to maintain credibility—much less to advance—it will be incumbent upon the DPRK to make a major gesture, and soon—to recognize the right of the ROK to exist, for example; or to demobilize part of its enormous and offensively-poised conventional military force; or to offer verifiable assurances that it is eliminating its multifaceted program for the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Any of these confidence-building initiatives, however, would require of the DPRK a total departure from long-entrenched state practices—and a relinquishment of central regime priorities. Pyongyang has always maintained that its claim to authority over the entire Korean people is absolute and non-negotiable; further, it has repeatedly emphasized that it regards military power as its very key to survival.

Ordinarily, governments are not expected to bargain over their self-identified vital interests, much less trade them away. Yet this is precisely what the next phase of the engagement approach would seem to expect of the DPRK. Little wonder that the engagement process, despite seemingly spectacular early headway, now looks to be so very stalled.

Like the millennium itself, the millennial moment in Korean security policy appears to be passing. Certainly it should, at least for the sake of South Korea and her Western allies. Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington will all assuredly be better served by a less age-defying, and less other-worldly, approach to dealing with the North Korean threat.

To be sustainable and effective, a strategy for DPRK threat reduction must begin by striving to grasp the inner motivations, external objectives, and military capabilities of the North Korean regime—and must continue by unflinchingly facing the implications of those inquiries. It should carefully and deliberately move to lower Western vulnerability to North Korea's diverse instruments of menace, while simultaneously denying Pyongyang the means by which to further perfect its techniques for international military extortion. It should aim to anticipate the manners and means by which Pyongyang might find it advantageous to create tension or promote conflict—and prepare to press the regime in its own arenas of comparative disadvantage (such as economic performance and human rights).

No less important, a strategy for reducing the external threats posed by the North Korean regime must attend to the complex particulars of constructing a sturdy regional security architecture for *post-DPRK* Korea. In the final analysis, every one of the great powers of the Pacific—the United States, Japan, China, and Russia—could help the ROK in the great task of building peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula. By contrast, the DPRK—the real, existing DPRK that we know today—has absolutely nothing positive to contribute to such a project.

With the change of administrations in Washington, current U.S. policy toward North Korea will naturally undergo review and scrutiny. The essays in this volume offer a distinct alternative to the current engagement approach. These authors collectively suggest the outlines of a strategy for promoting peace and security in the Korean peninsula manifestly sounder than the ones contemplated or implemented by Washington in recent years.

Peace and freedom in Korea, as this volume underscores, can be treated as a practical strategic objective, one that policymakers need not rely on miracles to attain.

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## INTRODUCTION

Henry D. Sokolski

The monographs in this book were all commissioned as part of a year-long project sponsored by the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC), the U.S. Air Force's Institute for National Security Studies, and the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. They were written to help three working groups develop strategies to curb the threat posed by North Korea's strategic weapons programs.

Central to these groups' efforts was competitive strategies analysis. As detailed in an earlier Strategic Studies Institute volume, *Prevailing in a Well-Armed World*, this approach requires analysts to examine four sets of questions. Stephen Bradner in his monograph, "North Korea's Strategy" (Chapter 2 of this volume), examines the first three sets of questions. These concern what one's strategic assumptions and goals are, who the likely key third actors are, and what strategies would make the most sense for each party to pursue. The last set of questions concerns what the relative costs and risks might be of the alternative strategies devised. These questions were discussed in consultations with experts and government officials after the working groups made their findings regarding the first three sets of questions.

The groups' final report, which is this volume's first chapter, has received a good deal of attention. Its recommendations concerning U.S. nuclear and space cooperation with North Korea were detailed in *The Asian Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* and were also highlighted in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Aviation Week*. More important, the report caught the attention of senior-level officials within the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the

Defense Department, all of whom asked for and received private briefings on the report.

This volume, of course, consists of more than just the working groups' final report. In addition, it includes all of the research that NPEC and the Institute for National Security Studies commissioned to prepare the working groups. Some of this analysis, such as Stephen Bradner's monograph on North Korea's strategy (Chapter 2), Joseph Bermudez's and Sharon Richardson's projection of North Korea's future strategic weapons efforts (Chapter 3), and Jack Rendler's monograph on human rights (Chapter 4), is easily identifiable in the final report. However, the differing analyses of China's strategy toward Korea by Admiral Eric McVadon and U.S. Army retired Colonel Larry Wortzel (Chapters 5 and 6), Victor Cha's study of Japan's views of Korea (Chapter 7), Marcus Noland's analysis of the economic determinates of Korean unification (Chapter 8), and the conventional arms control analysis of Bruce Bennett (Chapter 9) were just as critical to the work groups' deliberations. Indeed, without them, the group would have been unable to answer the competitive strategies questions necessary to produce the final report's recommended alternative strategies.

The hope in publishing these essays in a single volume is that they will provoke at least as much debate and reflection among their readers as they did for the working groups. Indeed, any lay reader interested in the future of East Asia or analyst wanting to review current U.S. policies toward Korea will get more than a fair start with *Planning for a Peaceful Korea*.

# CHAPTER 1

## PLANNING FOR A PEACEFUL KOREA: A REPORT OF THE KOREA COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES WORKING GROUP

Henry D. Sokolski

With the major changes that Korea has seen in the last 6 months, a natural question is whether or not there really is any need to develop a new long-term Korea strategy. Aren't things going well enough?

Certainly, the contrast of events before and after June 2000 is striking. Despite years of rhetorical acrimony against South Korea and the United States, the two Kims met in June, and Kim Jong Il agreed that the U.S. presence in South Korea was useful. In January, Kim Jong Il threatened to launch another new long-range missile that could hit the United States, the Taepo Dong II. Yet in October, he offered to end all further development of such missiles in exchange for U.S. assistance in launching peaceful North Korean satellites. Earlier this year, North Korean military training activities reached record levels, yet this fall saw the first series of high-level military-to-military talks on threat reductions between North and South Korea. North Korea, meanwhile, has sought admission to the World Bank, has normalized relations with Italy and Australia, and is seeking to do the same with key members of the European Union.

One cannot ignore these events. Yet, recognizing the improved atmosphere they have wrought begs the question of why they have taken place and continue to occur. Is it because the North Korean leadership believes their country can tolerate more political and cultural infiltration than

they thought it could before? Or is North Korea simply engaging, as it has before, in strategic deception aimed at placing the United States, South Korea, and Japan in some new form of diplomatic disadvantage? North Korea's tactics have changed, but has it changed its strategic goals? Is the North abandoning its aim of perpetuating its peculiar brand of cult communism? Has it begun to pursue more moderate military goals?

Unfortunately, with the possible exception of the North Korean leadership, nobody knows for sure. Even South Koreans are debating the merits of their new Sunshine policy. Opposition party figures argue that South Korea should return to the diplomacy of reciprocity. Kim Dae Jung's supporters, meanwhile, do not claim that their policy has succeeded in turning the North away from its hostile, tyrannical ways. They argue only that over time, their concessionary diplomacy toward the North will help secure such change.

This, then, suggests that the United States and its East Asian allies will have to hedge their bets. There may be cause for optimism. But progress on North Korean strategic weapons proliferation, military intimidation, human rights abuses, and the implementation of prior agreements must still be pursued, much as they were before—with planning and a good deal of vigilance.

Overview.

This report is the result of 2 years of planning, over a year's worth of commissioned research, and the participation of over 40 East Asian and weapons proliferation experts and policymakers from Capitol Hill and the Executive Branch.

What makes it different is its use of competitive strategies analysis. Instead of focusing on current events, the working group used competitive strategies analysis to anticipate the challenges and opportunities the United

States and its East Asian allies would face regarding the Korean Peninsula over the next 10 to 20 years. Rather than focus first on how the United States and its allies might cooperate with North Korea, the group reviewed the competing aims and strategies North Korea and others might have regarding the Peninsula's future.

Finally, the group tried to develop alternative long-term strategies that would do more than address current weaknesses in U.S. and allied efforts to secure peace in the region. In specific, the group tried to propose how the United States and its allies might leverage their comparative strengths in new ways against the enduring weaknesses of North Korea and other competing actors in East Asia. The idea here was to first discover what peaceful competitions the United States and its allies might engage in and then to win those competitions in a manner that would undermine Pyongyang's most offensive behavior.

The group offered three specific long-term recommendations:

First, the United States and its allies should do more to clarify how they might develop their advantages in advanced conventional arms against North Korea. Pyongyang's interest in acquiring strategic weapons capabilities, after all, is rooted in its belief that these weapons capabilities are all it needs to checkmate a U.S.-allied conventional response to North Korean military threats. By not clarifying how much more the United States and allies can do to execute their declared conventional counterstrike strategy against North Korean provocations, the United States and its allies are encouraging North Korea to believe it is correct.

Second, to ensure their long-term nonproliferation policies are effective, the United States and its allies must do more to oppose Pyongyang's illiberal, militant rule and violation of its own citizens' human rights. Almost all nonproliferation victories to date (e.g., in South Africa, Ukraine, Argentina, and Brazil) were occasioned by a



transition to liberal self-rule. The most worrisome proliferators, meanwhile, include nations hostile to such liberalism (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Libya, China, Syria, North Korea). Thus, besides being morally dubious, U.S. and allied reluctance to work with others to get Pyongyang to improve its human rights record is likely to undermine genuine nonproliferation.

Finally, the 1994 Agreed Framework nuclear reactor deal and the recent space launch cooperation offer need to be modified lest they complicate the long-term prospects for nonproliferation. First, tying nuclear inspections and dismantlement to the promised reactors' construction is only likely to produce delay. Yet, having these large reactors operate in North Korea is also dangerous from a nuclear proliferation standpoint. As such, it would make far more sense to replace at least one of the reactors with a nonnuclear power plant. There are similar concerns with the proposed space launch cooperation deal. Here, again, it would make sense to offer the civilian benefits of satellite technology (e.g., space imagery, space navigational and communications services) rather than space launch services, which necessarily involve access to the know-how to launch intercontinental-range payloads.

Each of these findings along with the analysis they were based upon is presented below.

### Key Assumptions.

In assessing what ought to guide U.S. and allied strategies regarding Korea, the group reached the following conclusions: Any U.S. or allied strategy toward North Korea for deterrence or cooperation is most likely to be effective if it assumes that North Korea and, at times, China and Russia are engaged in a competition with the United States, Japan, and South Korea over the fate of Korea.

The United States and its allies should assume that the outcome of this competition is vital to the peace and

prosperity of the entire region. In fact, miscalculations could serve as a catalyst for a strategic military rivalry between Japan and China that could conceivably go nuclear or ballistic and revitalize major military power competitions beyond the Peninsula. On the other hand, if properly managed, this competition could result in the peaceful unification of Korea on terms acceptable to both the Korean people and the nations in the region. The fate of human rights, democracy, and peace for the entire region is tied to how this competition is conducted. Any strategy that is unacceptable to South Korea or Japan undermines America's ability to work with its close allies to leverage the behavior and thinking of China, Russia, and North Korea.

Agreement on these points and reliance on competitive strategies analysis influenced how the group went about its development of alternative strategies. For one thing, the group saw the most urgent U.S.-Korean concerns—e.g., North Korean development of nuclear and missile capabilities—as symptoms of much more basic factors. These factors included:

- the Kim regime's (or clan's) uncompromising desire to stay in power,
- the political threat that true political and economic reform presents to the Kim regime's maintenance of its control,
- the imperative of sustaining the myth that the Kim regime is superior to all others and the consequent requirement for high levels of isolation from the South and other cultures,
- the North's fear that eventual unification with the South will come at the expense of the continued rule of the Kim regime,
- the importance of the military to keeping the Kim regime in power and preventing the forces of peaceful

coexistence with Seoul from undermining the regime, and

- the Kim regime's recent efforts to use its offensive military capabilities (including its missile and nuclear capabilities) to help persuade the outside world to provide the food, fuel, and foreign credits necessary for its short-term survival, without the necessity of making fundamental political or economic reforms.

Thus, North Korea's recent seemingly schizoid behavior: North Korea prepares to launch a new intercontinental ballistic missile, the Taepo Dong-2, but after U.S. and Russian pledges to open trade and possibly pay for launching North Korean satellites, Pyongyang puts off launching the missile. North Korea continues to concentrate nearly 70 percent of its combat forces within 100 kilometers of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). It increases its artillery and rocket launcher deployments in this zone. It augments its production of submarines, missiles, aircraft, and artillery at record levels within the last year, increases the pace of military exercises, and then offers to meet with South Korea's president at a history-making summit.

### Korean Conventional and Strategic Weapons Threats.

In fact, the group understood Pyongyang's interest in developing strategic weaponry to be a logical extension of its conventional arms capabilities. Currently, Pyongyang can threaten the prompt destruction of Seoul, Korea's largest concentration of population and wealth, with conventional arms alone. In addition, its military could attack and establish a modest foothold on or near the DMZ. Its ability to sustain such operations for a long period of time or to move its conventional forces further to the south, however, is negligible. In fact, South Korean and U.S. air forces could be counted upon to establish air superiority fairly quickly,

allowing their planes to demolish any visible North Korean land convoys headed south. In the longer term, the buildup of U.S. forces in Korea could be used to push back or outflank any North Korean incursion.

The North Koreans clearly understand this. They certainly do not need long-range missiles with nuclear, chemical, or biological (NBC) warheads to destroy Seoul or to make a military-diplomatic land grab along the DMZ. They do, however, need such weaponry to deter or complicate any allied counteroffensive. South Korean and Japanese airfields and ports critical to reinforce U.S. and South Korean forces are all vulnerable to missile attacks. Certainly, the pace of reinforcements could be slowed to a crawl if any of these logistical nodes were hit with NBC warheads. More important, both U.S. and Japanese officials would have to think long and hard about backing the military reinforcement of South Korea if it risked having U.S. or Japanese territories struck by long-range North Korean missiles.

These concerns have gotten the bulk of attention among U.S. and allied military analysts. Yet, the opposite point—that without its massive offensively deployed conventional forces, North Korea's deployment of strategic weaponry makes far less military sense—has received scant attention. For this reason, research was commissioned on what kinds of conventional arms reductions efforts might make sense to propose to the North Koreans. Certainly, the issue of conventional force reductions would have to be tackled as a part of any Korean unification effort. There also is doubt whether North Korea would have to make the most reductions.

That said, most members of the working group were uneasy about proposing anything specific at this time. Their key concern was the fear that any proposal would result in undesirable reductions of U.S. forces currently deployed in Korea. As the Perry Report emphasized, any withdrawal of U.S. forces now would undermine the ability of the United

States and its allies to deter a North Korean attack. What the group did find to be curious, however, was the lack of any serious ongoing study of the complicated issues surrounding force reductions even in the government contractor community. Many of these issues were identified in the commissioned research.

In lieu of proposing conventional arms control at this time, the group agreed that the United States was not doing enough to neutralize North Korea's military strategy. In essence, this strategy consists of two elements. The first is the offensive deployment of North Korea's conventional forces for a short-range surprise attack. The second is the acquisition of long-range strategic weapons capabilities that could threaten rearward U.S. and allied staging bases to disrupt and deter any effective allied counterstrike. To date, the United States and its allies have focused diplomatically on efforts to get North Korea to promise not to deploy further strategic weapons capabilities. These efforts have produced mixed results.

The working group concluded that the United States and its allies need to do much more to dissuade North Korea from concentrating its conventional forces so close to the DMZ. In the case of a North Korean attack across this zone, the United States currently has a declared strategy of counterstriking deep behind the line of battle against Pyongyang. Clearly, North Korean military planners do not believe the United States is serious about implementing this plan. Why else would the North deploy nearly 70 percent of its offensive ground forces within 65 miles of the DMZ? This not only makes any outflanking maneuvers by allied forces much easier, it leaves strategic rearward areas such as Pyongyang much more vulnerable to attack.

If we are serious about reducing South Korea's vulnerability and reducing North Korea's incentives to acquire and brandish strategic weaponry, then Washington and Seoul, in the group's view, need to make their current military strategy much more credible.

## Recommendation: Clarify What Our Military Strategy Against Pyongyang Requires.

In specific, the group agreed that the United States and its allies must clarify precisely what military capabilities are needed to implement the current strategy to address a North Korean attack against South Korea. The group also concurred that the United States and its allies need to identify better what North Korean actions might put this strategy (and its variants) into play. Towards this end, the working group created a military task force to identify what basic military capabilities, if acquired, would help the United States and its allies persuade North Korea to redeploy its existing forces in a more defensive manner. Among the capabilities the military task force identified were:

- Dispersed and offshore logistics capabilities, along with stealth technology and deception operations, to reduce U.S. and allied reliance on large logistics facilities, air bases, and ports that are naturally vulnerable to missile attack.
- Deception operations and stealth technology to conceal rapidly deployable allied maneuver forces.
- Long-range, precision-strike systems, including long-range bombers and fighters; long-duration unmanned air vehicles and missiles; stealthy mine-resistant amphibious and arsenal ships; integrated C3I systems, and the enhanced-lethality precision-guided munitions necessary to launch an effective deep strike against North Korea at reduced levels of vulnerability to North Korean air defense and anti-shipping systems.
- Information warfare and tailored munitions directed at North Korea's targeting systems and offensive command structure.

- Public information campaigns focused in the United States, ROK, and Japan to highlight the military technological dominance noted above.

Clearly, if the United States and its Asian allies had these military capabilities today, it would make North Korea's continued forward deployment of so much of its conventional forces near the DMZ untenable. Indeed, faced with such allied military capabilities, North Korea would have to redeploy much of its forward forces further north simply to protect Pyongyang against a possible allied counter strike. Beyond this, Pyongyang would have to spend even more on new air and sea defense capabilities—monies that it otherwise might have spent on more offensive weaponry. Finally, all of this might be accomplished while reducing the footprint of U.S. forces based in Japan and South Korea—something that would make them less vulnerable to both military and domestic political attacks.

The potential value of these military fixes, however, comes at a cost. The first is financial: all of these capabilities are largely beyond the immediate procurement plans of the United States, Japan, or South Korea and would not be cheap. The second is political and military: unless properly orchestrated, allied efforts to procure these capabilities might be misread as an offensive effort aimed primarily against Beijing. This, in turn, might produce an arms rivalry that the United States and its allies would not want to pursue.

The working group's military task force was conscious of these dangers. At the same time, they believed that the military dangers attendant upon a failure to bolster U.S. and allied military strategy against a possible North Korean attack were quite real. Their recommendation, therefore, was to play to America's comparative advantage in military innovation but to do so with the active participation of the Chinese military.

Specifically, the group recommended that the United States invite Chinese military officials to a series of military war games focused on scenarios involving possible U.S. and allied responses to different types of North Korean attacks against South Korea. These games could usefully

- be conducted at U.S. military service schools,
- highlight the range of damage that U.S. and South Korean forces could inflict in a variety of counterstrikes against a North Korean attack against, or strikes into, South Korea,
- be conducted on the basis of what might happen 5 to 15 years out factoring in the use of advanced military technologies,
- include exercises to demonstrate to China and other key regional players the challenges they would face with refugee control and humanitarian assistance operations,
- allow the Chinese representatives to express their concerns, and
- involve allied representatives as appropriate.

These games would have several objectives. First, they would help identify what new programs and operations were required to implement U.S. and allied strategy, which would in turn help bring them into being. Second, they could serve to impress upon the Chinese the seriousness of the U.S. and allied commitment to South Korea's security, a perspective which the Chinese could then convey to officials in North Korea.

With any luck, the North Koreans might reconsider their current course. One would hope that the United States could at least force a debate within North Korea about the risks of simply building up offensive forces along the DMZ backed by the further development of nuclear, chemical,



biological, and long-range missile capabilities. Finally, these games would give the United States and its allies direct access to and influence on Chinese thinking on these and related Korean matters.

### Strategic Weapons Proliferation and the North Korean Regime.

In the midterm, getting more serious about the military competition on the Korean Peninsula should help bolster deterrence. In fact, the Perry Report's "Fifth Key Policy Recommendation" was for the United States and its allies to "approve a plan of action prepared for dealing with the contingency of DPRK provocations." The Perry Report goes on to note that "these responses should make it clear to the DPRK that provocative actions carry a heavy penalty." The Perry Report placed special emphasis on the need to develop responses to possible "provocations in the near term," but the clarification exercises the working group recommended clearly could be made a part of this effort.

This should help in the near and midterm. In the long run, however, the cause of nonproliferation can be sustained only with a significant moderation in the North Korean regime itself. In dealing with current events, the Perry Report may be right: We must deal with North Korea "as it is, not as we might wish it to be." But for the period that the working group was considering—the next 2 decades—regime questions are important. This is not just because we "wish" things to be different in Pyongyang, but because we know that most of the worst proliferators—e.g., Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and China—have, like North Korea, been hostile to human rights. More important, we know that the clearest nonproliferation victories—e.g., South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, and Ukraine—all came with these nations' movement away from illiberal rule. If one is serious about promoting lasting nonproliferation, then indifference to these matters is a mistake.

It was for this reason that research was commissioned to examine the issue of North Korean human rights and what the United States and its allies might do too improve them. Several points emerged from this research and working group discussions. First, the ability of the United States and its allies to work within North Korea to change the regime's behavior is limited. On the one hand, overt, unhindered access to North Korea is not now possible. Covertly trying to overthrow the Kim regime, on the other hand, seems unrealistic.

With this in mind, the working group focused on what could be done to influence North Korean behavior from outside its borders. Speaking out at the appropriate United Nations (UN) forums on human rights was considered to be the minimum. Currently, the United States is quite vocal about abuses in China at these forums; yet it is virtually silent at these same venues regarding North Korea's transgressions. Beyond this, the group agreed that the United States and its allies should condition all humanitarian aid upon the proper monitoring of its distribution and that it should be given in-kind rather than in currency. As for international loans, these too should be made contingent upon measurable improvement in North Korea's protection of its citizens' human rights. Finally, the group concurred that the liberal democracies of the region—South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, etc.—should promote the further spread of liberal democracy and spotlight the shortcomings of states such as North Korea.

That said, the group understood that these measures were unlikely to have an immediate impact. There also was disagreement about the value of increasing trade and commerce with North Korea. Most thought trade could be used to open up North Korea, yet nearly as many feared that trade would be conducted in a concessionary manner that would only bolster the existing regime.

However, one idea highlighted in the commissioned research did seem actionable. It concerned the increasing number of North Korean refugees fleeing to China and Russia. Currently, there are between 100,000 and 200,000 North Korean refugees living in China and a much smaller number who have fled to Russia. The upper range represents nearly one percent of North Korea's entire population.

These North Koreans flee their country at great personal risk. First, they must elude or bribe North Korean border guards. Then, they must do the same with the Chinese authorities or risk arrest. It is estimated that of those arrested in China in 1999, approximately 7,000 (i.e., nearly ten percent of the new arrivals) were forcibly repatriated to North Korea. In March 2000 alone, Chinese authorities are believed to have forced 5,000 refugees back to North Korea. All of these repatriations violate international human rights agreements China has signed or ratified.

If the United States and its allies are serious about promoting genuine, lasting nonproliferation in Korea, it is essential that they promote greater North Korean respect of human rights and of enlightened government. In this regard, the working group agreed that one of the most promising opportunities was to persuade China and Russia to uphold their international obligations prohibiting forced repatriations.

**Recommendation: Encourage China and Russia Not to Repatriate Korean Refugees.**

One sure way to encourage North Korea to treat its own citizens better is to reduce the risks for its citizens who choose to leave North Korea. In fact, China has signed or ratified a number of international agreements that prohibit forced repatriations. It has violated all of them. These agreements include:

- The United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees, Article 33 of which prohibits forced return of refugees when there is a serious risk that this would result in a further violation of their human rights,
- The Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which requires close cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
- The Convention Against Torture, Article 3 of which prohibits the forcible repatriation when there are grounds to believe repatriated parties would be subject to torture, and
- The Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which makes the freedom to leave one's country a legal right.

China, for its part, is not eager to adhere to these agreements. Its biggest concern is that stopping forcible repatriation of North Korean refugees might encourage more North Koreans to flee to China. As it is, China has difficulty sustaining employment in Manchuria for its own citizens and can hardly afford an influx of additional mouths and labor.

The United States and its allies should work privately with China to see if they can help to address these concerns. Western aid and investments in Manchuria might be offered to help China cope with the problems North Korean refugees present. Arrangements to relocate North Korean refugees to locations outside of China might also be made quietly. A similar effort might be made to address the smaller numbers of refugees fleeing to Russia.

Nuclear and Space Cooperation and Proliferation.

Although the working group avoided debating the merits of current policy, one program, the Agreed Framework of 1994, kept intruding into the group's deliberations. The reason why was simple. Although the original arrangement

was supposed to be completely implemented by 2003, it now is clear that the promised reactors may not come on line anytime before 2010 or later. This is well into the period the working group was assigned to consider.

More important, it is the Agreed Framework, more than any other U.S. and allied effort, that the future of North Korea's known nuclear production facilities is tied to. So long as North Korea believes it is in its interest to uphold the deal, the operation of these facilities—a small reactor and a large reprocessing plant—will remain frozen. On the other hand, it is only when a significant portion of the first promised reactor is completed that North Korea must come into full compliance with its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) obligations. Nor is North Korea obligated to begin to dismantle its other declared nuclear facilities under the deal until construction of this reactor is finished.

In fact, North Korea is free to pull out of the Agreed Framework at any time. The same is true of the United States and those nations contributing financially to implement the deal. Supporters of the original deal emphasized that North Korea would have much more to lose from withdrawal than the United States and its allies since it would forfeit either completion of the reactors (worth over \$5 billion) or their continued fueling. Yet, 7 years later, this eventuality is no longer so clear.

Indeed, in the nuclear area, the two things Pyongyang's military nuclear planners need most are what the Agreed Framework supplies. First it affords a vast increase in the number of nuclear technicians (under the deal South Korea must train approximately 1,000 North Koreans in nuclear operations). Second, it supplies a massive expansion of North Korea's nuclear materials production base. Thus, what Pyongyang could produce in 1994—one to two bombs' worth of plutonium a year—the two proposed modern U.S.-designed reactors, when completed, would exceed by nearly two orders of magnitude (i.e., an annual production of between 75 to 150 bombs' worth of material).

Compounding these concerns is an additional danger: the 1994 deal allows North Korea to delay dismantling its declared nuclear facilities until after the first of the two reactors (capable of making up to 75 bombs' worth of material annually) is completed. Clearly, this puts North Korea in a much more advantageous position with regard to possible withdrawal than the United States or its allies. Pyongyang can withdraw at any time, resume nuclear weapons materials production with its declared facilities, enjoy the advantage of more trained nuclear technicians, and conceivably increase its plutonium production with one of the two promised reactors by a factor of 30 or more.

All of this suggests that tying nuclear inspections and dismantlement to the completion of two modern reactors is a risky proposition. At a minimum, the 1994 deal is poorly leveraged to secure dismantlement. Supporters of the deal who are anxious to keep the United States and South Korea engaged in talks with the North tend to downplay these concerns. Yet, because of technical and legal challenges that those building the reactors would face, in the long run it is unclear if this project will serve or undermine the cause of North-South cooperation. A partial listing of these difficulties include:

- The reactors cannot be built without the export of U.S. nuclear items, the shipment of which to North Korea (a known violator of international nuclear safeguards) would require a controversial waiver of U.S. nuclear control laws.
- The only legal way the U.S. president could waive these laws is to secure a complex bilateral nuclear cooperative agreement with North Korea, the negotiation of which he has not yet begun.
- The required IAEA inspections of the North (which will require 2-3 years of unhindered access to North Korea) have not yet been agreed to by North Korea and cannot be performed in time to allow the reactors

to be built anytime near the revised 2007 construction target date.

- North Korea lacks the nuclear regulatory background sufficient to license and properly oversee the safe construction and operation of the plants and has no way to insure against nuclear accidents (which leaves participating nuclear contractors dangerously exposed).
- North Korea's electrical distribution system (which consists in part of buried iron wires) will have to be rebuilt (at a cost of as much as \$1 billion) to be able to effectively move the massive amounts of electricity the reactors would generate and to assure the reactors' safe operation. To date, no one has stepped up to this task.
- To prevent a breakdown of North Korea's electrical grid (which consists of both North Korea's electrical distribution system and the power plants connected to it) that would jeopardize the safe operation of the two planned reactors. Pyongyang would have to bring 5 to 10 times more electricity on line than it currently is producing. Otherwise, the one or two gigawatts of electricity the two reactors would generate would overwhelm (i.e., disrupt the smooth operation of) even a fully upgraded electrical distribution system. Assuming a price of \$1 billion per gigawatt of newly installed electrical capacity, this would cost somewhere between \$10 and \$20 billion additional dollars and take many years to accomplish. Also, as part of this grid upgrading, North Korea would have to develop an unprecedented, massive increase in its consumption and demand for electricity.
- Finally, there is the economic friction that continued pursuit of the reactor project is likely to produce. This worry was driven home recently in an analysis done

for the organization responsible for building the two reactors, the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) by Bradley Babson, the World Bank's senior advisor on North Korea. As Mr. Babson pointed out, "If the nuclear plant project supported by KEDO was subjected to a normal World Bank project evaluation and appraisal, it would get an F." The reason why, he explained, was that North Korea's capacity to generate and distribute electricity was far too meager to absorb the output of even one of the proposed one-gigawatt power reactors. Thus, once the plants were completed, North Korea would not be able to sell sufficient electricity to repay the interest-free loan it assumed to fund the reactors' construction.

All of these factors, then, raise the question of why one would ever build the nuclear reactors in the first place. In fact, in 1997, the South Korean press reported that Pyongyang was well aware of these points back in 1994 and actually requested of its South Korean counterparts that one of the generating stations be nonnuclear. When this story ran in Seoul, and junior officials confirmed it, senior U.S. officials quickly denied it. But the point lingers. If we can't complete the reactors and Pyongyang needs electrical power, would it not be more sensible to make at least the first of the power stations nonnuclear and to tie the nuclear inspections and dismantlement called for in the Agreed Framework to this first nonnuclear power station's completion? Alternatively, KEDO could offer to revamp North Korea's existing electrical grid so it could take on more power as its economy grew.

As for its interest in space satellites, North Korea has no more of a civilian requirement for these or space launch services than it does for nuclear electricity. A case might be made for its gaining access to the services satellites might provide—e.g., imagery and communications. Yet, securing such services from the United States would be far cheaper and vastly superior to whatever peaceful civilian benefits Pyongyang might secure from launching its own crude



satellites (even if the United States and its allies paid for such launches). Offering satellite services in lieu of funding space launch also would avoid the risk of helping North Korean military planners secure the one thing they lack to perfect an intercontinental ballistic missile—a workable upper stage.

In fact, this is precisely the kind of technology the reported U.S. deal would be primed to provide. It is impossible to launch a North Korean satellite properly into orbit without developing an upper stage that can be appropriately mated to it. Under the deal currently being discussed, however, it is a North Korean satellite that will be launched. Because Pyongyang will be dictating the exact volume, weight, and fragility of the satellite being launched, it will dictate the precise kind of upper stage needed to launch it. Is there any way to prevent North Korea from specifying a satellite that would require a reliable version of the upper stage used in its frightening (and nearly successful) August 1998 launch attempt that flew over Japan? What of preventing Pyongyang from specifying some other satellite that would require an upper stage that it could then use on its more advanced Taepo Dong-2 launcher? Sadly, once one helps North Korea launch its satellites, discussions between its technicians and the satellite launch service provider over the specifics of the satellite to be launched and the design characteristics of the launcher and upper stage are unavoidable.

On this point, recent history is all too instructive. As the United States could not prevent China from gaining such information from U.S. space contractors and Russia could not live up to its pledges to block such technology from going to India, the prospects of keeping North Korea from securing such knowledge are slight. Nor does the option of using U.S. contractors to launch North Korean satellites (and trying again to keep these contractors from treading into the gray areas of intangible technology sharing) appear all that attractive.

Finally, it should be noted that in their current form both the nuclear and space deals risk straining the trilateral alliance relationship among South Korea, Japan, and the United States. Specifically, the Japanese are worried that both the nuclear and space deals are less in Tokyo's interest than they are in Seoul's or Washington's. The nuclear project, after all, sustains the South Koreans' Sunshine policy and keeps its nuclear utilities from floundering financially. It also has helped keep the United States from having to take a riskier, tougher stance towards Pyongyang's nuclear program. As for the space launch deal, this too helps sustain South Korea's Sunshine policy and costs Seoul little since it is not targeted by the Taepo Dong missiles. And it certainly relieves Washington of pressures to deploy missile defenses.

The benefits of these deals, however, are not so clear in Japan's case. First, Tokyo must pay \$1 billion toward the promised reactors' completion with only part of this money being spent on Japanese nuclear goods. Second, the full inspection and dismantling of North Korea's declared nuclear facilities are tied to the completion of the two reactors, which may take 10 or more years. As such, Japan's key worry—a nuclear Korea—is a threat it must live with for some time. Finally, a space cooperation deal that includes the Taepo Dong missiles, which might reach the United States, would address American concerns. Given the conventional artillery threat South Korea already faces, it may be possible to buy South Korean support for such a deal by allowing Seoul to deploy SCUD-range missiles of its own design. Yet, if it excludes No Dong missiles that can currently hit Japan, such a deal is only likely to strain the United States-Japan-South Korea relationship.

This, then, brings us to this report's final recommendation.

## Recommendation: Demilitarize Proposed U.S. Space and Nuclear Aid to Pyongyang.

Recently, *Nulceonics Week* reported that senior U.S., Japanese, and South Korean officials discussed the idea of substituting a nonnuclear power plant for the first of the two promised reactors. South Korean officials objected that making such a proposal at this late date might threaten support for the Agreed Framework. It is worth noting that the objection was one of timing rather than substance. Eventually, for all the reasons noted above, the logic of returning to this idea will be compelling.

As for the space cooperation proposal, there are real advantages to offering Pyongyang satellite services instead. Perhaps the most important advantage is that the United States could make sure that such shared imagery, navigational, and communications services would not be used for military purposes. North Korea might request detailed photos of South Korean bases, but lacking any peaceful civilian purpose, the United States and its allies could rightly deny the request. With satellite-based communications services, the United States or its allies might provide free access to existing transponders so long as communications were not encrypted. The United States should also at least try to secure Japanese backing for this offer by making sure that missiles that can hit Japan—the No Dongs—are somehow included in the deal as well.

Making these adjustments would not only eliminate the potentially self-defeating aspects of the current deals, they should help bolster the trilateral alliance relationship among the United States, South Korea, and Japan—something that the Perry Report itself specifically recommends.

## CHAPTER 2

### NORTH KOREA'S STRATEGY

Stephen Bradner

#### The Setting.

Internationally unpopular, with a broken-down infrastructure, a nutritionally deprived population, a stunted younger generation, and no evident means of economic regeneration, North Korea, a half century after its foundation, exhibits an unprecedented condition for a modern, industrialized society with expanding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long-range missile capabilities. Why did this happen? What, if anything, can be done about it? These are basic questions because the way the North got into this predicament tends to define and limit their long-term strategic options as well as what they can do in the near to mid term to extricate themselves. All of this can be seen in context only if we give serious attention to the peculiar nature of the Kim family regime (KFR) and the political culture, which shapes Pyongyang's<sup>1</sup> strategic conceptions.<sup>2</sup> We will discuss the enduring characteristics of the regime, the regime's strategic options, the significance of North Korea's WMD and long-range missiles, why so many find it difficult to grasp the essence of the "Kimist" system, and the serious policy dilemmas facing Washington and Pyongyang.

#### Regime Characteristics and Limitations.

The centrality of the military mindset can hardly be overemphasized. Shaped by his early experience as a guerrilla fighter against the Japanese, Kim Il Sung's outlook was something like a cross between Lenin's

“fight-talk, fight-talk” dictum and the view expressed in Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* that an organism which does not fight dies.<sup>3</sup> For Kim, the economy was to produce the implements of war, the education to produce capable soldiers, and the ideology to convince the population of the inevitability of war and the necessity for absolute obedience to a military leader who would ultimately be extolled to the point of infallibility.

*Guerilla Dynasty* by Adrian Buzo<sup>4</sup> is an extremely useful work in which Buzo emphasizes the significance of the guerrilla mindset and revalidates and updates the insights set forth in the two-volume work, *Communism in Korea*.<sup>5</sup> The following quotations from Volume II are pertinent:

Unquestioning loyalty and allegiance were the determinants of survival, and the “Party” took on an entirely military character, discipline and hierarchy being interwoven with the camaraderie of the small, determined—often desperate—band.<sup>6</sup> From guerrilla to governing party thus involved more a change of scope than a change of operational pattern or mind.<sup>7</sup>

Kim’s regime was born and bred in absolute hostility to any political authority in the South. Simply, the South is held to be a U.S. colony, and Southern officials are viewed as nothing more than lackeys of their colonial masters. In more than a half century, Pyongyang has never had anything good to say about Southern officialdom, and the government in the South has been seen as only one of many Southern organizations, lacking any particular legitimacy as a government and treated for the most part as something to be avoided, undermined, and, if possible, overthrown.

The regime operates like a kind of combination religious cult-crime family gang. Resort to violence is common, as are summary executions, often for political incorrectness rather than substantive violation of law. The regime’s leaders utilize gangland practices—counterfeiting, drug smuggling, extortion, kidnapping, and assassination—as tools of state policy. And, as one might expect, they show indifference to the welfare of ordinary citizens living on

their piece of turf, being concerned rather with how to maintain control and how to extract anything that may contribute to their own security and comfort.

Undergirding the regime is a vast tissue of myth and fabrication.<sup>8</sup> Kim Il Sung's first great myth was that it was Kim and his guerrilla forces who expelled the Japanese from North Korea in 1945. Two other foundation myths are the contemporary North Korean society as "paradise on earth" and the future unification of the peninsula under Kim or his son Kim Jong Il. There is also, of course, the myth of Kim Jong Il's birth on Paektu-san,<sup>9</sup> and both Kim Il Sung and his son are held to have thaumaturgical (i.e., miracle-performing) power and links with the supernatural.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, therefore, the entire society must be kept in virtual isolation, because if isolation cannot be maintained all these myths are likely to be challenged and undermined, with consequent severe damage to the belief system supporting the regime. Again not surprisingly, the economy is failing because in a world with so much pressure for interconnectivity, it is difficult to manage an economy of any significant size in the relatively isolated manner the regime attempts.

Finally, as the regime does not brook the possibility of compromise, it is locked into a zero-sum regime survival contest with its rival to the South. Why do we expect the competition to be zero-sum? First, because when we look at the major divided country scenarios of the past 2 centuries, we see that they seem to turn out that way. With so much water in between, the China-Taiwan scenario may turn out differently, but the cases of Yemen, Vietnam, Germany twice, and America in the 19th century all seem to suggest that while division may persist for what seems like an interminably long period, the forces for unity ultimately prove too strong.

When unity occurs, however, it does not come about through a fair and balanced compromise respecting and

preserving the interests and estates of the leadership on both sides. It's not a case of "I'm all right—you're all right." Rather, one side dominates, and it's a case of "We'll do the ordering, and you'll do the obeying." We witness a repetition of the ancient Athenian formula, "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must,"<sup>11</sup> with the extent of the suffering having a lot to do with the political traditions of the piece of turf in question. When that piece is Korea, it is reasonable to expect that the leaders on the losing side will not get the kind of generous treatment that, in the main, East Germany's leaders received a decade ago.

Second, the two societies on opposite sides of Korea's demilitarized zone (DMZ) are profoundly different, in fact, close to antithetical. The approaches to politics, economics, education, jurisprudence, religion, and even the meaning of life in North and South are very different. Northerners are taught to find the meaning of life in their devotion to their "great leader." The South has experienced periods of highly authoritarian rule to be sure, but at repeated critical junctures Southerners have clearly opted for what we may call the imperfect decency of democracy and the accountability of leadership rather than for the autocratic model. As one Southerner was anonymously quoted in the press a few years back, "North Korea deifies its leaders. We throw ours in jail." This is hardly an insignificant difference and one which, we may be sure, is not lost on the leadership in the North. Moreover, it is very difficult to identify any significant feature of the Northern system which Southerners could be expected to endorse—not the legal system, not their humanitarian accomplishments, not the success of the economic model, and certainly not the clarity of political thought.

In sum, the trench dividing Korea is much deeper and wider than in the German case. The big boss on the Communist side is in Pyongyang, not in Moscow, and the Kim family ideology appears to be much closer to the North Korean soul than communism was to the East German soul. Republic of Korea (ROK) news media cannot access North

Korea's people outside the Kim family regime audience, there is nothing like the cross-border passage of a million West Germans into the east prior to unification, and there is no common Korean experience comparable to the effort to build a modern, industrial, democratic society which engaged the whole of Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Finally, and most important, Korea had the war that Germany was able to avoid.

The point of all this is that in spite of the common cultural heritage prior to 1945, the differences between North and South are profound, and it is difficult to imagine how any policy crafted through the combined wisdom of Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo can make them go away.

What the Regime Cannot Do.

Currently, there seems to be no particular reason to believe that Pyongyang's leaders can either fix the North Korean economy on their own or "join the world" for the rational choice—"soft landing options" of reconciliation, reform, and opening that might bring about a fix. If by "soft landing" one means that the peninsular confrontation may ultimately be resolved without war, that thought does no great violence to a realistic outlook. If, on the other hand, one means that the confrontation can be resolved while the Kim family regime remains viable in the North, that notion would seem to belong on the shelf alongside the fantasy novels of H. Rider Haggard.<sup>12</sup>

Why are the soft landing options so difficult? When the U.S. Secretary of State visited Korea in early 1997, she was asked whether she thought the North and South would be able to negotiate the end of the Korean War. She answered,

It's very hard to predict. It basically depends on how much the North Koreans are hurting and whether they are willing to realize that a peaceful solution to this division is the best way to go.<sup>13</sup>



That would appear to be a rational and humane formulation. But the question is, who are the “North Koreans” who are supposed to see that a peaceful resolution is the best way to go? Are we talking about some 22 million people walking around in the country and trying to get by from week to week? Do we mean North Korea as a country? Or do we mean the privileged group at the top of the power structure who run North Korea and make all the decisions about what North Korea as a country will and will not do? A few years back a Korean political scientist explained that while anyone can posit the objective need of North Korea, viewed as a country, for the soft landing options, no one can show the connection between that objective need and the willingness of the Kim regime to pursue these options, or even their ability to do them without fatal collateral damage.

What is the problem with reconciliation? North Korea's leaders have programmed themselves and their people to believe that true Korean sovereignty and patriotism are to be found only in the inheritors of the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggles of the 1930s and 1940s. These inheritors are Kim Il Sung and his fellow combatants, their descendants, and their allies. This is what defines their identity. This is who they think they are. When they talk about “one Korea,” they mean *their* Korea with themselves in charge. The notion that somewhere on the peninsula there is another group of Koreans with “equal standing” with whom *they* must negotiate on equal terms about the future of the peninsula is doctrinally, strategically, ideologically, emotionally—virtually any way you look at it—repugnant and unacceptable. In spite of the June 2000 summit meeting, unless history, defectors' reports, and intelligence are all suddenly without utility, we can confidently predict that *they* will not do it.<sup>14</sup>

What about reform? A few years ago North Korean news media announced that Kim Jong Il had fired a round of 18 holes of golf in 34 strokes, some 25 shots below the recognized PGA record.<sup>15</sup> Here's a fellow who simply doesn't

make mistakes. What's to reform? We may laugh about this, but someone living in North Korea who starts to talk about the need for reform will not find it so funny. The whole idea of reform carries with it the notion that something needs fixing, that there is a better way of doing things. The implication is that something is wrong, impossible in a country with infallible leadership. Moreover, to endorse reform Kim Jong Il would have to renounce socialism, an East European mistake he has vowed he will not make, renounce the *chuch'e* ideology,<sup>16</sup> and, in the end, even renounce his own father, thereby undercutting his own legitimacy as the filial son who follows his father's correct policies. If all of this were not problem enough, the whole idea of reform entails a series of troublesome decisionmaking intersections very disruptive for a rigid, monocratic regime. For example, when to begin reform, in what sector to begin, how fast to go, when to extend to other sectors, and whom to put in charge? Experience in other authoritarian systems suggests that sooner or later this process is apt to produce debate about whether reform is being done in the right manner and whether the right people are doing it, a contradiction in a society where only one person is allowed to philosophize about what is right and wrong.

Opening entails many of the same problems. Northerners have been told for decades that the people of the South live in spiritual and material misery from which they must be liberated. This is dogma basic to the belief system and cannot be set aside. Should Northerners come to learn not only that this notion is false, but that the great mass of their Southern brethren live in a kind of affluence hardly imaginable in the Kim family regime "paradise," one can imagine the consequences for the regime's political support structure and the security of the leadership. Moreover, it must be questioned whether the North has the infrastructure necessary for opening in terms of legal guarantees, financial institutions, and professional expertise. The vast majority of the North's so-called

"technocrats" have not been educated at places like MIT, the Ivy League, Stanford, or the London School of Economics, but rather at Kim Il Sung University and Moscow University, where one can only guess at how much they have learned that may be helpful in guiding North Korea's entry into the flux and turbulence of the 21st-century world economy.

In sum, while these options sound reasonable for North Korea as a country, they all amount to things the regime either doesn't know how to do or would find unacceptable, or which would punch holes below the political water line, or all three. It is as if by their policies the North's leaders have tied ropes around their necks and these changes would be like pulling the trap door from beneath their feet.

Three consequences would seem to follow. First, while the Kim regime may cautiously hazard some limited experiments, in general they will opt to impose on their population the continuing pain of economic failure rather than to embark on a path of revitalization that will lead to growing dependence on perceived hostile forces in the South. Second, absent war, the superiority of the South in every aspect of life except the military will continue to grow and Northerners will, as time passes, become increasingly aware of the South's superiority. Third, if unification is not accomplished by war, economics will tend to dominate. It will be the economically superior South that leads the process of reintegration which precedes, encompasses, and continues on past political unification. While all of this may take considerable time, the entire period is arguably only an interim condition. Ironically, the longer the period, the more apparent Southern superiority and the more inevitable the final result. As this process unfolds, it will become increasingly difficult for the Northern regime's leaders to maintain any relevance, as they will not have the knowledge or the resources to do much that is useful.<sup>17</sup>

From all of this follows yet another important consequence: the Kim family regime would seem to have no

long-term survival option that is not military in nature. This notion is not popular with policymakers, or with many other observers either, for that matter. No one likes to contemplate the horrendous cost that would attend another peninsular war. But it is difficult to see how extended peaceful coexistence can lead anywhere but to the increasing appeal of the South and the gradual erosion of popular support in the North. The only way Pyongyang can escape such an eventuality is by gaining control of the entire peninsula, and it is virtually inconceivable for that objective to be accomplished by negotiation. However repugnant this idea may be, it provides a rationale for KFR conduct over time. In rejecting the options outsiders urge upon them, the KFR *acts* as if they believe it.

Finally, I would contend that to use any other template as a means of analyzing and predicting *over time* what Pyongyang will and will not do is to set oneself up for a virtually endless series of false expectations.

### Strategic Options.

Currently, North Korea would seem to have four broad strategic options. Two offer the prospect of long-term survival, but they are difficult and dangerous. Two others would seem to offer the means of temporary survival only.

The first obviously is to attack and win. The upside is the possibility of absolute victory. If the KFR gains control of the entire peninsula, economic failure becomes politically irrelevant, or at least much less relevant. Peninsular polarity would end, as would the economic and political challenge from Seoul. The downside is, of course, that this is the most dangerous option, as it risks total defeat and the prospect of death, delivery into the hands of the enemy, or ignominious flight.

The second is the campaign of subversion and revolution, the strategy envisioned in their "peaceful unification" slogan adopted in 1954. The upside is that it

offers the possibility of total victory with minimal risk. The problem, of course, is that since it is extremely hard to do, the possibility of success is extremely small. The would-be guerrilla operations of the mid to late 1960s failed, and there have been no attempts to revive them. As for subversion, the record seems to show that while individuals can be recruited and anti-state groups formed, the ROK society as a whole is too big and various to take down. Basic to the likely failure of this option, of course, are four factors which decrease the appeal of the KFR message: (1) the evident failure of North Korea's economic model, (2) the long and continuing track record of violence against the South, (3) the dynastic succession, which is viewed in the South as ludicrous and anachronistic, and (4) political democratization in the South, which over time has deprived radical students of their political cover as fighters for democracy.

The third option is the so-called "soft landing," or "rational choice," option of reconciliation and economic cooperation, reform, and opening. The upside is that over time all of these might help to bring about economic and social recovery in the North. The downside is that, as already discussed, they would inevitably undermine regime foundations and lead inexorably to the collapse and end of the Kim family system. Moreover, in the interim, this option does nothing to fend off the threat from the South, as the ROK is still there and still obviously superior economically. Finally, of course, sustained pursuit of this option would tend to foreclose the first two options above.

The fourth option is what we may call an aid-based survival approach with minimal or no reform. This appears in the main to be the strategic option the KFR has currently adopted. The advantages of this option are significant. It avoids the pitfalls of internal change. It avoids the danger of broad engagement with the ROK but allows for selective ROK business activity in the North. And it preserves the possibility of continued priority to the military and of options one and two above. The disadvantages are also

considerable. There is a potential sustainability problem. Will the outside world give enough for long enough? The ROK is still there and still superior. Collapse is still possible, and there is rampant corruption, just as when the ROK pursued a similar strategy in the early to mid-1950s.

Let us now take another look at option one. It has of late become fashionable to describe North Korea's objective as survival. In the context of North Korea's economic failure and the growing gap between the South and the North, survival has come to be equated with a defensive stance. The assumption has been that the North's military establishment must be declining along with the rest of the economy, and that the best the Pyongyang regime can do now is to try to keep information control intact and hang on somehow, even as the leadership agonizes over the inevitable decision to change course, to abandon hostility to the South, to reform, open, and accept the assistance the South can provide. Against the background of these assumptions there has been a tendency to believe that the North no longer poses a military threat, and that Pyongyang must surely have abandoned its goal of gaining control over the entire peninsula. In this context it is held that any decision to attack the South would be suicidal, an irrational decision. But these assumptions require critical evaluation.

First, here is how the North may think they can win. They may believe they can attack with little warning and that their artillery will smash forward defenses and destroy the morale of the defenders. They may expect roads in the South will be choked with refugees to the point that Combined Forces Command (CFC)<sup>18</sup> forces will be unable to maneuver. They will expect that their large and well trained special operations forces (SOF) will create havoc in the rear, and that this along with the use of chemical and biological weapons will demoralize and panic soldiers and civilians alike. Finally, in spite of the good showing by the ROK Navy off the west coast last year, they may believe that when the

war starts a substantial portion of the defending forces will either flee, or fight with little enthusiasm.

Second, Pyongyang's leaders may expect that at some point in the future the United States will be distracted by developments elsewhere, perhaps in the Middle East or the Taiwan Straits, and be unable to respond quickly and effectively with off-shore reinforcements.

Third, there is little doubt they have noticed the current U.S. aversion to any kind of involvement which seems likely to entail heavy casualties. They may well calculate that if they can strike early and hard in a way that produces high casualties at the outset, Washington will come under political pressure to extricate rather than to reinforce.

Fourth, what we know about North Korean force dispositions simply does not support the idea that Pyongyang has abandoned the military option or that their overall stance is defensive rather than offensive. Since 1980, along with an increase in the size of their ground forces from 700,000 to more than a million, the North has steadily deployed combat forces forward. Key changes include significant numbers of mechanized and artillery units relocating Southward. Today 70 percent of all combat forces, to include 700,000 troops, 2,000 tanks, and 8,000 artillery systems,<sup>19</sup> are located South of a line between Pyongyang and Wonsan, or 100 kilometers from the DMZ, as compared with 40 percent so deployed in 1980.

Their artillery includes 500 long-range systems deployed over the past decade. The proximity of these long-range systems to the DMZ threatens all of Seoul with devastating attack. Without moving any of its artillery, the North could sustain up to 500,000 rounds per hour against CFC defenses for several hours. Other North Korean threats at the outset are the use of missiles and SOF actions against key targets in the Seoul area. Much of the North's military force is protected in underground facilities, including 4,000 facilities in the forward area alone. From

their current locations these forces can attack with minimal preparations.

North Korea's tactical doctrine emphasizes domination of the battlefield by surprise, firepower, and mobility. Critical to North Korean success are secrecy, delivery of massive amounts of firepower against extremely narrow frontages, widespread use of WMD, and the ability to methodically feed reinforcing and exploitation forces to sustain the momentum of attack. Pyongyang's campaign plan envisions defeat of the CFC forward defense and isolation of Seoul within seven days and exploitation operations throughout the remainder of the peninsula to defeat ROK forces and close air and seaports for arriving U.S. off-shore forces.

There are, to be sure, aspects of North Korea's dispositions that are defensive in nature. During the past year, coastal defenses have been improved in the forward area, combat positions have been established along major routes between Pyongyang and the DMZ, and antitank barriers have been emplaced in the forward area. But these dispositions should be seen in context. In any projected attack against an enemy whose strong suits are flexibility, speed, and the ability to strike deep, the North must anticipate the need for defensive operations even in an overall offensive context. Moreover, in three critical aspects, Northern dispositions do not appear defensive. First, most of their artillery is deployed so far forward as to be vulnerable to surprise attack and useless in defense. Second, on the Northern side of the DMZ there are no defensive fortifications equivalent to Forward Edge of Battle Area (FEBA) A, B, and C in the South.<sup>20</sup> Third, tunnel construction under the DMZ would seem to have little utility except for offense.

During the past year, North Korea has been implementing an ambitious program to improve its ground force posture. The highlight of this initiative is the deployment of large numbers of 240mm multiple rocket



launcher systems and 170mm self-propelled guns to hardened sites near the DMZ. Other improvements include construction of missile support facilities, preparations for long-range missile testing, and enhancement of an already impressive camouflage, concealment, and deception effort. Production of military equipment, to include missiles, aircraft, submarines, and artillery systems, has continued, and since last summer training levels have surged to new heights.<sup>21</sup> All of this reflects continuing priority to the military and a remarkable allocation of resources in spite of severe overall economic deprivation.

Those who believe North Korea will not attack could in the end be right. One can imagine a whole host of reasons for Kim Jong Il to hesitate. Kim may hope his aid-based survival strategy will work indefinitely. He may worry about military sustainability and think that with time he can fix that problem. He may think his efforts to split the alliance will be successful. He may prefer to wait until the U.S. commitment weakens, or until the United States is occupied elsewhere, or until he can attain withdrawal of U.S. Forces, Korea (USFK). He may believe that he can hold on indefinitely with the assistance of his world-class counterintelligence system. He may even remain indecisive, unable to make a decision until it becomes virtually too late to make a decision.

However, those who say North Korea is too weak to attempt an offensive solution to the survival problem would do well to remember that in the 20th century Asian opponents handed the United States four big military surprises: the Pearl Harbor attack, the Korean surprise (not only the June 25, 1950, invasion but the skill and fighting ardor of North Korean forces), the Chinese intervention in late 1950, and the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam. Someone predicted each of these, but the establishment dismissed the predictions. In all four cases there seems to have been a measure of contempt on our part for Asian opponents and a tendency to overrate our own capabilities.<sup>22</sup> In all four cases, we paid a heavy price when the enemy did attack in spite of

all our reasons why they could not or would not. Hindsight teaches we are better served by believing that the enemy has the strength, will, and ingenuity to force us to fight by his doctrine rather than ours.

With regard to all four broad strategic options, it seems tolerably certain the KFR will attach primary importance to insuring the security and comfort of the leadership, especially Kim Jong Il himself, and on maintaining internal control. At a level of secondary importance, the regime will strive to insure that Chinese support continues for all options.

For all options except the soft-landing approach, primary importance will also be placed on weakening and ultimately eliminating the ROK as a state. In pursuit of this, the North will attack conservative forces in the ROK through propaganda smear campaigns as well as by assassination, kidnapping, and intimidation.<sup>23</sup> The North will also continue conducting espionage and surveillance operations against the ROK, support and direct radical and subversive organizations in the South, and try to discredit and weaken the ROK military establishment. As a means of marginalizing the ROK, Pyongyang will also continue trying in any way it can imagine to split the ROK-U.S. alliance and bring about the withdrawal of USFK by converting the armistice into a "peace agreement" and by discrediting USFK through propaganda and agitation over the sovereignty issue, Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), criminal jurisdiction, and territorial issues.<sup>24</sup>

As a part of this effort, Pyongyang will push for removal of the "Cold War structure on the peninsula" and seize every opportunity to thrust to the forefront the principles of independent and peaceful unification in accordance with "grand national unity."<sup>25</sup> As a means of exerting leverage against the United States and Japan, the North's WMD and long-range missile capabilities will be pushed at all cost rather than abandoned.<sup>26</sup> Already the world's most hardened potential belligerent with hundreds of miles of

underground tunnels and facilities, North Korea will continue sub-surface construction.

For all options except attack, the North will emphasize enhancement of its international image through diplomacy, propaganda, and normalization of relations with its great enemies, the United States and Japan, in order to maintain a flow of assistance from the former and maximum reparations from the latter.

With regard to the soft-landing option, it would seem that priority to the military and denigration of the ROK as lacking legitimacy would not reconcile very well, but these are fundamental KFR tenets and consideration of the regime's track record to date suggests they could not be abandoned, all of which underscores the point that, in the end, a soft landing will likely prove to be an illusion.

In pursuing its aid-based survival strategy, Pyongyang has an assortment of carrots and sticks at its disposal. Carrots could be such measures as greater transparency of WMD and missile development, greater site access, site destruction, suspension of testing and deployment, initiation of confidence-building measures, amelioration of propaganda attacks, formal negotiations with the ROK, and a suspension of kidnappings, assassinations, and infiltrations. Sticks could include abrogation of or threats to abrogate the 1994 U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework, provocations along the DMZ, coastal infiltrations, missile sales, further missile testing, and suspension of or threats to suspend various channels of dialogue with the United States, Japan, and the ROK. It seems reasonable to believe, however, that so long as the Pyongyang regime aims at encouraging donations from the outside world, primarily the United States and the ROK, its field of maneuver will be confined between, on the lower end, a level of threat needed to motivate donations and, on the higher end, a level of provocation that would cause a suspension of donations.

## The Significance of WMD and Missiles.

The Pyongyang regime appears to consider its WMD and long-range missiles as fundamental to survival and too important to give up. Four points would seem to be clear.

First, these capabilities enable the regime to bargain and blackmail for what it needs rather than having to beg. Second, while WMD and missile programs are important in this regard, it would be a mistake to imagine that is all they are, and to underestimate the importance attached to the programs per se and the regime's determination to pursue them. Such programs do not spring into existence overnight. Recruitment of nuclear specialists began in the 1950s. North Korea began assigning specialists to Yongbyon in the 1960s.<sup>27</sup> All of this occurred long before North Korea had cause to anticipate economic failure or the need for a negotiating card to cope with the consequences of such failure.

Third, WMD and long-range missiles appear integral to Kim Jong Il's notion of making North Korea a "great and powerful state." Simply, he thinks great powers have such capabilities while weak states do not. In this respect, he will almost certainly consider these capabilities central to his own historic mission and therefore to his notion of his own identity. He and his regime have always been bent on achieving these capabilities. It will hardly be easy to force them to assume a posture that entails stripping them of these capabilities, a posture they have always steadfastly refused to assume.

Fourth, these capabilities should be seen against the background of what has been happening all across Asia—from Syria and Israel on the west, to the subcontinent, to China, and to North Korea on the east—as second- and third-tier states develop asymmetric counters to western conventional military superiority. All of this is cogently captured in Paul Bracken's book *Fire in the East*, in which he argues that as we transition not into the post-Cold

War era but into the post-Vasco da Gama era, Asian states are for the first time in 500 years developing capabilities that will enable them to strike back at western states which try to impose their will by state-of-the-art military technology.<sup>28</sup> These new capabilities will enable North Korea, among others, to hit our bases in the Pacific and, ultimately to strike at our homeland, thus raising the costs and hazards of our attempts to dictate outcomes of our choosing far from home. As Bracken points out, Asian states are pursuing these new weapons, especially enhanced missile range and accuracy, not just to create random mass destruction, but rather to exert leverage, by force and threats of force, toward specific political objectives. If one asks what Pyongyang's specific political objective is vis-à-vis the United States, the answer is not long in coming. They have been telling us week in and week out for decades about the need to get USFK off the Korean peninsula.

Finally, it may be instructive to remember that, whether the policy was called "equal emphasis," "military first," the "importance of guns," or "great and powerful state," North Korea under the Kims has from the beginning placed a high priority on maximizing its military power. Therefore, in trying to force them to abandon their WMD and missiles, we are very likely trying to make them revert to something they never were.

Currently, it appears evident that the regime is pursuing its aid-based survival strategy along with efforts to subvert the ROK while maintaining and improving its ability to attack. Reconciliation, reform, and opening appear to have been rejected, although Pyongyang is prepared to simulate these options from time to time when doing so will facilitate donations from outside. It is sometimes argued that this rejection is irrational. It might, however, be more realistic to see this rejection not as a case of irrationality but rather as a case of a rational mind operating in a highly abnormal environment, one in which the divided country scenario, an extreme ideology ill suited

to economic success, and a track record of hostility to the South have caught Pyongyang's leaders in a trap, one nonetheless confining even if of their own making, depriving them of the normal options of a normal state with leaders motivated by a normal goal orientation. Herein lies the tragic dilemma of North Korea's existence. What is medicine for the populace is poison to the regime, and the interests of rulers and ruled are as opposed as in any ancient despotism.

### Why We Do Not Get It.

All the foregoing is not profound. It should not be difficult to grasp the abnormality and incapacity of the KFR. Why, then, do so many smart people miss it? We can conjure up at least six reasons.

First, most of our experience is with normal states, and it is natural to think that the normal tools of diplomacy and international intercourse will be effective. Second, we tend to miss the code words even when Pyongyang provides the code, dismissing the KFR's statements of its goals as propaganda. One example: The 1948 Korean Workers' Party (KWP) Rules state that

the KWP struggles for the liberation of the Southern half of our country from American imperialist aggressive forces and internal reactionary rule and for the attainment of the complete unification of the country on a democratic basis by firmly uniting the broad masses of North and South around itself.<sup>29</sup>

This is straightforward enough, but some seem inclined to think it no longer applies simply because it was enunciated a half century ago. Another example: In the July 4, 1972, joint North-South declaration, the two sides pledged efforts for independent and peaceful unification in accord with great national unity, yet by July 15, 1972, North Korean news media were again proclaiming that all Korea would be united under Kim Il Sung. More important, Kim Il

Sung himself, in interviews later that summer with Japan's daily *Mainichi Shimbun* and monthly magazine *Sekai* and in North Korean publications, explained the meaning of these terms. "Independent" meant "to force the United States imperialists out of South Korea"; "peaceful" meant the reduction of armed forces and halt of military modernization in the South; and "great national unity" meant freedom for pro-North Korean subversive and revolutionary groups to operate in the ROK.<sup>30</sup> We should not think it inconsequential that North Korean negotiators insisted on the inclusion of this terminology in the agenda for the June 2000 summit, as each term represents a pivotal node in the struggle for dominance between two rival regimes of truth.

Third, although Korean issues seldom exhibit convoluted, Byzantine patterns, there is frequently a measure of garbage strewn over the surface that makes it hard to look down and see the basic simplicity. In this case, we have strewn some of the garbage ourselves by unrealistic predictions and by formulations which do not distinguish between country interests and regime interests. Fourth, there is a kind of policymaking trap in that while it is only natural for policymakers to conceptualize the object of policy in a manner that affords some hope of policy success, this can pull us off target analytically.

Fifth, we have tended to accept the popular notion that "globalization"—i.e., increased trade, the spread of technology, and the movement of ideas and people across national frontiers—would create prosperity and a sense of common interest that would ameliorate international tensions and hostile confrontation. This principle did not work in 1914 despite active trade between Britain and Germany and the German fondness for Shakespeare. It seems particularly unsound to expect it to work in the Korean case. Sixth, a serious appreciation of the North Korean political culture and regime intentions would tend to throw cold water on some of the hopeful expectations prevailing in Seoul and Washington.

## Nonproliferation Policy Education Center's (NPEC's) Questions Considered.

1. What is the abiding context of U.S. strategy that any current strategy must comport with, and what major assumptions underlie and thus condition our strategic thinking about the future?

- North Korea expects the United States will remain the global superpower in the near to mid term.

- North Korea's force dispositions indicate its top leadership does not expect the United States to launch a preemptive attack on the North.

- North Korea's leadership does expect the United States to defend the ROK if North Korea attacks, and entertains the possibility that the United States will use nuclear weapons if needed.

- U.S. aversion to high casualties appears to be considered a vulnerability to be exploited.

- North Korea probably believes the United States must protect Taiwan but will try to influence the China-Taiwan rivalry so as to avoid war with China.

2. What is the evolving nature of the global strategic environment? What alternative futures are possible over the next 15-20 years? North Korea will see the following trends:

- Pressure for the reduction and, eventually, withdrawal of USFK will increase in both the United States and the ROK.

- U.S. and western influence in Asia will weaken due to a lack of resolve and an increase in the military strength of China and other Asian states.

- Development of WMD and long-range missiles in Asia is the critical factor for change in the strategic balance and will continue.



- Hi-tech terrorism will increase, as will U.S. vulnerability.

- Development of information warfare will continue.

- Chinese support for North Korea could remain as at present or weaken.

- Russia could push for a higher-profile role in the Northwest Pacific in concert with China or independently.

- Japan could stay in partnership with the United States or could take a more independent path.

- Japan could become a nuclear power.

- War between China and the United States over Taiwan is possible and could be exploited by North Korea.

- Significant improvement in U.S.-Chinese relations is possible.

- Improvement in ROK-Chinese relations is possible.

- ROK economic superiority over North Korea is increasing.

- North Korea is becoming increasingly dependent on outside (U.S. and ROK) assistance.

- Korea could be united under either North Korea or ROK control.

- Attack could become the only viable option for North Korea under the Kim regime.

- The KFR could collapse.

3. Which alternatives do we prefer? Which do we wish to avoid?

- North Korea's leaders believe the United States will try to maintain and increase its influence in Northeast Asia.

- They believe the United States prefers the status quo on the peninsula, but will opt for ROK control of all of Korea if this can be realized at an acceptable cost.

- North Korea prefers a U.S. withdrawal from the region.

- North Korea prefers to gain control of all of Korea through a ROK collapse or war.

- North Korea prefers hostile relations between China and the United States

- North Korea prefers hostile U.S.-Russian relations.

- North Korea prefers a breakup of the hostile combination of the United States, the ROK, and Japan.

- North Korea prefers hostile relations between Japan and China.

- North Korea prefers worsening ROK relations with the three major regional powers and breakup of the ROK-U.S. alliance.

- North Korea (specifically, the KFR) must avoid any circumstance, or combination of circumstances, which could lead to loss of internal control and eventual ROK domination of the peninsula.

4. Who are our current and likely future competitors?  
Who are key third parties?

- North Korea sees the United States, the ROK, and Japan as its competitors.

- China remains the key third party.

- ... China shares the American interest in preventing proliferation of WMD and long-range missiles on the peninsula, fearing that if unchecked it could lead to nuclear weapons development in Japan and Theater Missile Defense (TMD).

- ... China no longer endorses North Korea's ideological claim to the entire peninsula.
- ... China sees the ROK as an important trading partner and investor.
- ... China sees hostilities on the peninsula as damaging to its economy.
- ... But China prefers to keep a friendly buffer state on its border and sees a unified Korea allied with the United States as a potential threat.
- ... China is uncomfortable with U.S. "hegemony" in the world and the Pacific region, but China is by no means unmindful of the advantages of stable relations with the United States.
- ... China probably expects the KFR to collapse at some point due to the mistakes of North Korea's leaders, but prefers that this occur later rather than sooner.

• With regard to North Korea-China relations, the question that has preoccupied many is whether Beijing can induce Pyongyang to follow the Chinese model of opening up. There has been increased speculation on this question in view of Kim Jong Il's favorable comments on the Chinese model during his recent trip to Beijing. While Chinese support for North Korea appears unconditional, key Chinese officials have been saying for some time that outside observers tend to overestimate Chinese knowledge of, and ability to influence, actual conditions in the North. In any case, the following considerations appear relevant.

- ... North Korea is not a huge country with centuries of experience in managing conflict and disparity.
- ... Unlike China, North Korea does not have a large agrarian base which can be exploited to power the recovery of its industrial sector.
- ... We have seen no sign in Pyongyang of the kind of policy debate that preceded policy change in China.

... Kim Jong Il has long known that the North Korean economy doesn't work. If he has not tried to change it, we can reasonably presume it's because he is aware of the concomitant political dangers.<sup>31</sup>

... Unlike the Communist regimes in power in China and Vietnam, Kim Jong Il and his comrades have yet to win their war of national unification and do not have the same margin for experiment. Pyongyang faces a much greater threat from Seoul than Beijing faces from Taipei.

- Russia is also a key third party and could become a significant supporter of North Korea, but this seems less likely than for China. The following generalizations appear safe.

... Russia values its economic relationship with the ROK.

... Russia is unhappy with the United States as sole superpower and would like to find a way to assert itself in the Pacific region.

... But Russia faces westward and, unlike China, sees the Korean peninsula as thousands of miles from its vital centers of power.

- North Korea sees Russia, and even China, largely as lost allies. China, however, is an important source of economic help, and both are occasional suppliers of weapons. Pyongyang would not expect military support from either except in the case of hostilities between China and the United States over Taiwan.

- Russian President Putin's recent visit to Pyongyang in mid-July 2000 after talks with Chinese President Jiang Zemin in Beijing appears to be part of an effort to recover Russian influence and counter U.S. dominance in the region. Russia was seen as a marginal player in the region when the peninsula reemerged as a major issue in Northeast Asia. Moscow was completely excluded in

negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear development and the four-way talks on the peninsula. The 11-point communiqué issued by Putin and Kim Jong Il at the end of their talks on July 20 appealed to the international community to oppose the U.S. plan to build an anti-missile system.

If this appeal is to succeed, however, Putin needs to find a way to resolve the problem of North Korea's missile development program. According to Russian news media, Kim Jong Il told Putin that North Korea will stop its missile development program if other nations provide the North with rocket boosters for space exploration.<sup>32</sup> However, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen has expressed doubt that North Korea would abandon its ballistic missile projects in return for access to a third country's rocket programs for "space research" purposes. Cohen and Pentagon officials point out that during U.S.-North Korea talks in Kuala Lumpur in July 2000, Pyongyang's negotiators reiterated the North's intention to develop long-range ballistic missiles. "Our missile policy is to develop, to produce, and to deploy powerful missiles continuously," Pyongyang's top negotiator said, according to Cohen.<sup>33</sup>

5. What are our competitors' and key third parties' goals and their strategies for achieving them?

- The primary goal of North Korea (specifically, the KFR) is survival, i.e., to avoid loss of control over the piece of territory that has been theirs for more than a half century. For the time being, this can be interpreted as maintenance of the status quo, but for reasons already explained, it is unlikely this can be a long-term solution if it is de-coupled from total peninsular dominance. Without control of the whole peninsula, North Korea will become increasingly dependent on the ROK with increased risk of falling under Southern control. To stay alive in the near term, North Korea will selectively engage with the outside world, reaching out to the European Union and keeping the China connection healthy, as well as selectively engaging the United States and the ROK. This has little to do with

opening up North Korea itself but a lot to do with obtaining assistance, allowing selective activity in the North by ROK business groups, and demonstrating to all that Pyongyang has multiple options. For a long-term solution, however, as explained earlier, North Korea must find a way to obtain USFK withdrawal and bring the South under its control.

- The Pyongyang regime has identified the ROK Sunshine policy, or engagement, as a means of inducing change in the North. In this respect the policy is seen as a threat, but the economic inducements that come with the policy are an important part of the regime's aid-based survival strategy. Pyongyang will continue to exploit the policy for its economic benefits while resisting the kind of change which could undermine the regime.

6. What is the current state of the competition? What future states are possible, and which do we prefer?

- At present, there is no apparent internal threat to the survival of the KFR. No immediate threat appears likely as long as the regime remains willing to triage the population, as long as substantial donations from the outside continue, and as long as Kim Jong Il remains in control of multiple counterintelligence agencies, whose combined capabilities amount to a world-class internal security posture.<sup>34</sup>

- Currently, the North appears to be succeeding in its efforts to improve its conventional and unconventional military capabilities. In the last 12 months, North Korea has done more to arrest a decline in readiness and improve its conventional military capability than in the last 5 years combined.<sup>35</sup> Ground and air exercises last winter were the largest in over a decade, and forward deployment has reached an unprecedented level. The North's special operations forces, largest in the world, number over 100,000 and are significant force multipliers, providing the capability to simultaneously attack both forward and rear CFC forces. Despite the Agreed Framework and efforts to engage the North in missile talks, North Korea's asymmetric threat is formidable and growing. They

continue to produce and deploy long-range *Nodong* missiles capable of striking bases in Japan. They are also developing multi-stage missiles with the goal of fielding systems capable of striking the continental United States. They have tested the 2,000-kilometer-range *Taepodong-1* and continue working on the 5,000-kilometer-plus *Taepodong-2*. North Korea possesses a large number of chemical weapons that pose a threat to both our military forces and civilian population centers.

The USFK J2 estimates that the North is self-sufficient in the production of chemical components for first generation chemical agents. They have produced stockpiles estimated at up to 5,000 metric tons of several types of agents, including nerve, choking, blister, and blood. North Korea has the capability to develop, produce, and weaponize biological agents, to include bacterial spores causing anthrax and smallpox and bacteria-causing plague and cholera.<sup>36</sup> While North Korea has frozen its nuclear weapons program at the Yongbyon plant, and activity at a suspicious facility at Kumchang-ni has been forestalled, nuclear weapons development could well be continuing without our knowledge at underground facilities elsewhere.

- Pyongyang continues an unrelenting propaganda campaign against USFK's presence conducted overtly through official North Korea news media and somewhat covertly through unofficial spokesmen, who push the North's agenda.

- While it is the official policy of the alliance that USFK will remain in status quo, the North can be said to have made headway in a several respects.

- ... Frictions between USFK and the host society have increased dramatically due to allegations of a massacre of civilians by U.S. troops at Nogun-ni in 1950, an accident at the bombing range near Maehyang-ni this year, and continuing arguments over the fairness of the Status of Forces Agreement. While it can hardly be said that USFK is blameless in

all things, it is nevertheless true that these issues are made to order for North Korean exploitation, as Pyongyang's objectives blend with the nationalistic emotions of young journalists (who have no recall of the Korean War) and the natural inclination of the news media to compete for consumer attention.

... The idea of removing the "Cold War structure" on the peninsula has become a popular cliché in the ROK. North Korean spokesmen are very clear about what this means. Removing the "Cold War structure" means getting USFK off the peninsula.<sup>37</sup> Others who talk about ending the Cold War structure are often vague about what they mean, but the formulation seems to carry the connotation that hostility between North and South was caused by the Cold War and that if foreign influence could be removed, reconciliation would somehow follow. From the historical viewpoint, this is an odd argument to make since the ROK actually owes its existence to the Cold War.<sup>38</sup>

... The notion is gaining ground in some circles that the "buyout" of North Korea's WMD must extend beyond the economic dimension into the security dimension, i.e., that if we expect the North to reduce its threat to the South, we must take action to reduce the threat we pose to North Korea.<sup>39</sup>

- How China and Japan will react should it become clear that North Korea has both nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them is problematic. Of the current principal players in the Korean scenario only China can be confident that North Korean missiles will not target them. For obvious reasons, China would prefer that the North not have these capabilities, but there are as yet no indications that China would exert the kind of pressure sufficient to actually prevent their development. Japan, on the other hand, can expect to be targeted. Pyongyang clearly wants to find a way to neutralize United Nations Command (UNC) bases and staging areas in Japan. Defector Hwang Chang



Yop has said the North is planning to “scorch Japan” as a means of doing this. How Japan will react to the threat of being scorched or to actually being scorched remains to be seen. It may be argued that Japan will be cowed initially but then respond by building its own Theater Missile Defense (TMD) or deterrent capabilities. Either way, to be subjected to blackmail by Pyongyang will be a new and traumatic experience for the Japanese, and it is difficult to believe they will be content to remain helpless in the face of such a threat.

- The foregoing trends would seem to indicate that, for the moment, North Korea is gaining ground in the competition, as they have been able to extract increased amounts of assistance from outside while improving both their conventional and asymmetric military capabilities and carrying on their public relations campaign against USFK. While these trends seem to indicate that, absent KFR collapse, North Korea will be an even more menacing opponent a few years hence, they do not point the way to escape from the KFR’s long-term strategic dilemma. From Pyongyang’s point of view, there are still questions that do not have easy answers. How long can effective population control be maintained in the absence of economic recovery? Will economic recovery actually ease the problem of population control or will it only create new difficulties? Can Pyongyang continue to extract donations should it become clear that donations have not been an effective means of curbing weapons development or ameliorating Pyongyang’s hostility to Seoul?

7. What major problems, enduring weaknesses, and other constraints face our competitor(s)? What are their strengths?

- It will be difficult for North Korea to maintain military opacity in the face of combined U.S.-ROK-Japanese intelligence capabilities. These combined capabilities cannot ferret out everything, but they can divine enough to enable conclusions on three key questions: whether

Pyongyang's hostility to Seoul has really eased, whether North Korea deployments are basically offensive or defensive, and whether North Korea is abandoning the WMD option or pursuing it.<sup>40</sup>

- Similarly, the KFR will find it difficult to both maintain and hide its hostile political posture towards Seoul. The government in Seoul may, of course, elect to ignore this and allow the general public to remain for the most part undisturbed in their current threat denial mode.

- The KFR aid-based survival strategy means continuing and very likely increasing dependence on archenemies, the United States, the ROK, and Japan.

- Breakdown of the economy and official distribution system engenders weakening of population control in regard to movement, economic activity, lifestyle, morale, and crime and corruption.

- The regime increasingly fears ideological contamination through an influx of Christianity, capitalism, and ROK and Chinese popular culture.

- The most enduring, fundamental, and perhaps incurable weakness is that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, North Korea cannot undertake the measures necessary to revitalize its economy and reinvigorate its society without instituting changes that would deny the fundamental tenets of the Kim Il Sung-Kim Jong Il system, with consequences ultimately fatal to the regime. This basic contradiction applies not only to the economy, but also to modernizing the entire social mindset, and in consequence North Korea under the KFR seems fated to remain multi-dimensionally out of sync with the world at large. To the extent this defect can be remedied for North Korea objectively as a country, the regime will be increasingly threatened. This weakness may not matter very much if Kim Jong Il should decide on a military roll of the dice. Otherwise it is hard to see how he can get rid of this haunting specter.

- KFR strengths are the opposite face of their weaknesses. Information control and ideological indoctrination have up to now enabled the KFR to keep the population marching in the desired direction and, for the most part, resigned to the deprivations imposed upon them. The control systems in place negate political or factional opposition and give the regime virtually total tactical flexibility even as strategic and philosophical flexibility are denied.<sup>41</sup>

Priority to the military option, almost to the point that there is no other option, has enabled the regime to maintain and improve its impressive military posture. Ironically, this very contradiction works to the advantage of the KFR in two respects. First, it is the worrisome imbalance between the North's economic failure and menacing military posture which motivates donations from the outside world out of fear of the "cornered rat" scenario. Second, in spite of this, it is difficult for many to believe that a country with a ruined economy can still field a threatening military force. Hence the contradiction that the North's military capabilities are at once feared and underestimated.

8. In any and all cases, what are our time-phased goals for the competition—both overall and supporting?

- Pyongyang describes our goals as establishing and maintaining world and regional hegemony and stifling the socialist way of life in the North. The overall KFR goal is still to dominate the entire peninsula, as that is the only way to secure the future of the regime. KFR supporting goals will be, first, to negate U.S. goals, primarily by keeping their economy afloat by using their WMD/missile threat to extract assistance from the outside world. Second, they will try to force USFK off the peninsula by threatening UNC bases in Japan and by turning ROK public opinion against USFK and effectively splitting the alliance.

9. What are our areas of advantage or leverage, including our enduring strengths relative to the

challenge(s) that competition poses? What are our limitations or weaknesses?

- Pyongyang sees the United States as having the following advantages:

- ... Rapid force projection capabilities

- ... Air and sea dominance

- ... Superior intelligence and battlefield surveillance

- ... Nuclear weapons

- Pyongyang will also see weaknesses, which in some cases are the opposite face of our strengths. As the only superpower, the United States has unrivaled capabilities, but also unrivaled obligations. Pyongyang will watch for signs the United States is stretched too thin, too heavily engaged elsewhere, or politically fatigued and growing weary of its burdens. Knowing our aversion to casualties, the North will launch operations designed to maximize U.S. losses at the outset of hostilities. Pyongyang believes ROK and U.S. personnel will not be able to match the fighting spirit of their own Korean People's Army (KPA) soldiers.

- Pyongyang sees the ROK as having the following advantages:

- ... Vastly superior economic strength

- ... A larger and healthier population

- ... A superpower ally

- Pyongyang will also see weaknesses

- ... A fragile, above-ground infrastructure vulnerable to artillery and missile attack

- ... A weak and fractious body politic lacking consensus on national security issues

- ... Ideological confusion

- ... Vulnerability to chemical and biological warfare

The KFR will see their own advantages as spiritual—absolute loyalty to the leader, unity, discipline, and ideological firmness—and material, with a strong military, both conventional and unconventional, featuring mass, shock, and relatively unsophisticated but reliable weapon systems.

10. What basic capacities or core competencies do we need to develop, sustain, adapt, protect, and plan to exploit?

- North Korea needs to sustain, protect, and continue to leverage:

- ... Conventional and unconventional military strength

- ... WMD and long-range missiles

- ... Information control, including controls on permissiveness and liberalism, and maintaining a firewall against contamination in the form of Christianity, capitalist ideas, and ROK popular culture

- For any serious effort to undertake economic reform and engagement with the international economy, North Korea will need to develop:

- ... Understanding of how the capitalist market system works

- ... Entrepreneurial skills

- ... A credible legal infrastructure

- ... A stable foreign exchange

- ... Financial and banking expertise

- ... An internal information system and access to the Internet

Achieving these capacities will be both difficult and politically hazardous, as they will open the system to contamination and entail a measure of autonomy that conflicts with the KFR political culture.

- The ROK needs to develop:
  - ... More ground power
  - ... Better protection against chemical and biological agents
  - ... A better grasp of the nature of the KFR and its intentions toward the ROK
  - ... A more realistic educational approach to Korean history in the 20th century
  - ... More attention to alliance management and the need to defend both the alliance and the ROK democratic system against internal enemies
  - ... More basic science and research and development
  - ... Corporate and banking reform

11. What strategies can we employ that will permit us to influence—or even dominate—key competitions and future trends and events? How will the KFR react to strategies designed to move it in a direction which would seem to run counter to the core values of the regime?

- The answer to this question is far from simple; perceptions of the right answer will vary depending on whether one advocates an aggressive policy or a concessionary or engagement policy toward North Korea's WMD and the KFR itself. If one believes that concessions in the form of economic assistance and diplomatic recognition will induce the KFR to mitigate its hostility to the ROK, undertake reform and opening, and abandon its reliance on WMD and conventional military strength, it would be a reasonable strategy to sustain the regime in such a manner as to render it increasingly dependent on assistance from the United States and key third parties, ultimately giving the United States sufficient leverage to dominate the relationship.

If, on the other hand, one believes that such a policy will not induce the regime to abandon either its hostility or its menacing array of conventional and asymmetric weapons, the case for economic engagement is much weaker. In such a case, one could still argue for engagement, but the argument would focus more on the aim of preventing war than on any expectation of dominating the relationship. If one believes that no amount of economic assistance or engagement will cause the KFR to abandon its zero-sum view of the North-South confrontation or to abandon its priority to the military, to include WMD, the residual argument for engagement would be that it will in time contaminate, subvert, and destroy the KFR.

While the current ROK administration describes its policy toward the North as the "separation of economics and politics," it is interesting that, as Nicholas Eberstadt has pointed out, South Korean and Western proponents of increased commercial ties between the South and the North argue that the process will have an ameliorating effect on Pyongyang's internal decisionmaking, bringing about a kind of rapprochement through trade along the lines of West Germany's policy of change during rapprochement.<sup>42</sup> Eberstadt goes on to provide experiential evidence that, contrary to common belief, commercial ties with, and even subsidies from, capitalist countries have done little to moderate the national security policies of Communist regimes. The point in any case is that ROK policy is not the separation of economics and politics, but the pursuit of a political goal through economic means. This is all the more apparent when one considers President Kim Dae Jung's repeated statements about the need for a USFK presence even after unification.<sup>43</sup>

The argument for a more aggressive policy toward the KFR and its WMD is based on the expectation that engagement will neither induce the regime to alter course nor cause it to collapse, but will rather sustain the regime even as it continues to prioritize its military and improve its WMD while continuing to inflict the pain of economic failure

on its population. It is argued that the regime would fail if the following sources of sustenance could be interdicted:

- Aid from the United States
- Aid from ROK conglomerates
- Cash inflow from Chosen Soren (an association of pro-North Korean residents in Japan)
- Remittances from Koreans in the United States and Canada with relatives in North Korea
- Aid from China
- Proceeds from foreign arms sales

Proponents of such a policy also urge the desirability of a more robust military posture in and around Korea to insure that Pyongyang will not see a military option as attractive even as all its other options are running out. With regard to all of the above, policymakers and advisors will have to ask themselves whether their policy recommendations stem from their analysis of the KFR and its likely reactions or vice versa.

For further discussion of Pyongyang's likely courses of action and intention to dominate by missiles and WMD, see question 12 and the following section.

12. What is the likely range of competitor and third party countermoves? How might Pyongyang respond?

- Consideration of the track record of the KFR and its political culture strongly suggests that no amount of economic cooperation or outright assistance will induce the regime to abandon the core of its belief system. To endorse the rational options and mitigate its hostility to authorities in the South would require North Korea's leaders to abandon what amounts to a national mission and to unsay all they have been saying for more than half a century to justify their own authority, justify the damage they have inflicted on the South, and justify the sacrifices they have imposed upon their own population. As all of this would



have fatal consequences for the internal viability of their system, it appears likely they will shun this course of action.

- We lack the kind of data necessary to predict how the KFR would react should the United States and its allies attempt a full-court press to interdict the flow of sustenance from outside. Some predict this would prompt a North Korean attack. Some predict Pyongyang would resort to naked blackmail. Some predict increasing loss of population control leading to cracks in the power structure and an end of the regime. No one can be sure.

- An aggressive policy by the United States would not appear feasible without the cooperation of key third parties. It would require an end to the ROK engagement or sunshine policy and cooperation from Japan and perhaps from China as well. Based on what is now known, China would likely try to make up for North Korean shortfalls due to loss of outside help, but if the KFR should begin to lose its grip, it is uncertain whether Beijing could accurately assess Pyongyang's needs and respond quickly enough to arrest loss of control.

### The USFK Role and Pyongyang's Asymmetric Counter.

From time to time Pyongyang accuses the United States of trying to stifle the North. While this may not accurately reflect U.S. intentions, it does reflect the criticality of the USFK role. If, as we have earlier argued, the only way the KFR can avoid being on the losing side of a zero-sum survival struggle is to gain control of the entire peninsula, and if the only conceivable way they can do that is by force or the threat of force, then USFK sits squarely astride their road to survival. One way or another, virtually every apologist for Pyongyang must sooner or later confront this obstacle. This is what Kim Il Sung meant by "independent" unification in 1972. In his November 9, 1999, NAPSNET piece for the Nautilus Policy Forum, Hwal-Woong Lee, a ROK Foreign Service officer from 1956 to 1971 and more

recently a fellow at Korea-2000, a Los Angeles-based research council on Korean unification, argues that the Perry Report fails to recognize the long confrontation between the United States and North Korea, going back to 1953, when the United States fought a war with North Korea with the intent to obliterate it, and that the North's WMD programs are the inevitable result of North Korea's need to defend itself against USFK. Lee says Pyongyang cannot renounce its WMD programs with USFK in the South pointing guns at them. He argues that if the United States is serious about peace, it should recognize USFK as a threat to North Korea and eliminate the threat by consenting to a phased withdrawal in return for a total renunciation of WMD programs by Pyongyang. He proposes "a political arrangement for arms reductions and non-aggression pledges by the parties concerned." He does not spell out the implications of his recommendations for ROK national security.<sup>44</sup>

In his November 1999 interview with *Mal*,<sup>45</sup> Pak Yong Su, Vice Director of the Secretariat of the North's Committee for the Unification of the Fatherland, recalled that in February 1999 Pyongyang suggested high-level North-South talks based on three conditions: ending cooperation with foreign powers for anti-North Korean activities, abolishing the National Security Law, and guaranteeing the unification movement. These are, of course, very close to the July 4, 1972, principles, and in both cases, the first point implies the end of USFK. Pak goes on to say, "We have no choice but to settle with the United States the matter of signing a peace treaty and the matter of USFK withdrawal." Pak comments only indirectly about the future of the ROK, observing that a "peace that does not result in unification is impossible."

In contrast, the North's leader, Kim Jong Il, speaks bluntly and clearly about the South. An article in the October 8, 1999, *Nodong Sinmun*<sup>46</sup> quotes the "great leader" as saying,

If the United States had not occupied South Korea by force, our nation would never have been divided into two. And if the United States had not disturbed Korea's unification, we would have achieved national unification a long time ago.

The article goes on to explain that the South is a complete U.S. colony and that the incumbent puppet ruling group, which put on the veil of the "people," is nothing but a group of servants for the imperialists. Therefore, the writer argues,

As long as the enemy of unification, such as the puppet ruling bunch, remains in power, the independent unification of our country cannot be expected. This is one of the reasons the United States troops that occupied South Korea by force and the colonial fascist "regime," which follows them, are cancers that block our people's independent unification.

Some find it comforting to regard all this as nothing but propaganda rhetoric. We would suggest that the familiar refrain, as above, about the colonial status of the ROK and the need for USFK withdrawal has been Pyongyang's consistent position for a half century. It is unalterable doctrine, well grounded in reality in that the only end-state peninsular condition which would be safe for the Kim regime is unification under the regime itself. Such unification is indeed blocked by USFK's presence, as it defies the imagination how such an end-state could be achieved except by force or intimidation.

Perhaps the most straightforward presentation of Pyongyang's perception of North Korean-U.S. relations and of the regime's vision of the relationship of missiles and WMD to the future of the peninsula can be found in Kim Myong Chol's October 22, 1999, *Nautilus Policy Forum* piece titled "U.S. Will End Up in Shotgun Marriage with North Korea."<sup>47</sup> Kim argues that to improve relations with North Korea, the United States must abandon its long-standing support for the ROK, maintaining that the only alternatives are a nuclear arms race or a nuclear war. He notes that with 12 operating nuclear reactors in the

ROK, 51 in Japan, and 102 in the United States singled out as prime targets, it would take the North's hypothesized nuclear missile force only a few minutes to wipe the whole of South Korea and the entire Japanese archipelago off the world map.

Kim argues that the U.S. demand for renunciation of missile programs lacks justification and comes too late, as North Korea has already become a virtual intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) power with a small fleet of missiles locked on American targets. He observes that American authorities will have to realize there is no way of evacuating tens of millions of people from Washington, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego before incoming North Korean ICBMs strike.

Having outlined the dire consequences of war, Kim argues that American military intervention in the internal affairs of Korea caused the "Cold War structure" in that part of East Asia. He says the United States must see to it that its "Cold War syndromes" are ended, and that means dismantling the puppet regime in the South and abrogating all its "anti-Korean laws," including the National Security Law. Lest any should miss his meaning, Kim Myong Chol is absolutely explicit about the fate of the ROK.

It is now time that the ROK prepared itself to leave the stage of history, as its architect and parent, the United States, is taking a series of steps to move toward eventual normalization with the DPRK to end the Cold War. The ROK totally lacks any Korean national credentials and legitimacy, which the DPRK alone enjoys as it was founded by anti-Japanese armed partisans.

He closes with a statement in consonance with that of Kim Jong Il above and indicative of the North Korean regime's core doctrine:

Whichever started the Korean War, had the American forces not been fully involved, the Korean People's Army might have

emancipated the whole of South Korea and achieved territorial unification with minimum bloodshed.

Kim Myong Chol undoubtedly exaggerates the North Korea's current capabilities, but, like defector Hwang Chang Yop, he has long served the regime and doubtless knows its mindset. He probably reflects accurately the Kim regime's perception of ends and means and the way Pyongyang's WMD and missile programs relate to their desired end-state for the peninsula. He clarifies what Pyongyang means by the end of the "Cold War structure" on the peninsula, and this may be no small service in view of the prevailing tendency to use this term carelessly. Finally, he reminds us that the North Korea's notion of legitimacy is grounded in the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle of the 1930s and 1940s. This idea not only justifies the 1950 invasion, it also defines the identity of the leaders of the "guerrilla dynasty." To them, "One Korea" has always meant *their* Korea, with the KFR themselves in charge.

Kim Myong Chol's threatening argument is couched in the context of nuclear weapons. It might be comforting if this were all there were to worry about, since fear of an overwhelming U.S. response might be expected to deter use of such weapons. But as Richard Betts, Director of National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, explains, the new and most troublesome threat of mass destruction would appear to be biological weapons, with nuclear weapons second, and chemicals a distant third. Betts makes three points about the new world of mass destruction. First, such weapons will not represent the technological frontier of warfare but will increasingly be the weapons of the weak, of states that cannot compete with U.S. conventional superiority. Second, the kind of deterrence and arms control that marked the Cold War are not likely to be effective. Third, responses that might most effectively cope with the new threats are not likely to find a warm welcome. In particular, the response that should have highest priority, a serious civil defense program, is one that is apt to be ignored, opposed, or ridiculed, especially as it

tends to reduce popular confidence in government reassurances about national security and could have an undesirable economic impact as well.

The most troubling conclusion for American foreign policy as a whole, however, is that to reduce the danger of attacks against the United States it might be necessary to pull back from involvement in some foreign conflicts, as American activism to maintain stability provides the prime motive for such attacks.<sup>48</sup> *Jane's Intelligence Review* notes that experience in World War II and the Iran-Iraq War demonstrates that the political and psychological impact of surface-to-surface missile attacks far outweigh the physical destruction caused, observing that,

The subtlety behind a missile's ability to exert terror is twofold: firstly, the suddenness or short warning time of an attack presents a sense of helplessness among civilians . . . and secondly, the anxiety from the ambiguity surrounding the type of missile warhead being delivered.<sup>49</sup>

The threat that biological weapons pose is, of course, in no way mitigated by widespread reluctance to even contemplate their effect or by ignorance. As one expert observes:

One of the side effects of the closing of the American bio-weapons program was that the United States lost its technical understanding of biological weapons. There has long been a general feeling among American scientists—it's hard to say how widespread it is—that biological weapons don't work. They are said to be uncontrollable, liable to infect their users or unworkable in any practical sense. . . . The current generation of American molecular biologists has been spared the agony of having created weapons of mass destruction, but, since these biologists haven't built them, or tested them, they don't know much about their real performance characteristics.<sup>50</sup>

## The June 2000 North-South Summit.

The big question about the mid-June summit is the question we have always had about North Korea at each critical juncture: Is North Korea really changing, or will we get the same old wine in a new bottle? Only time will tell, but in view of Pyongyang's record and in the absence of compelling evidence, prudence would dictate that our expectations should be kept low. What seems evident already, however, is that the summit contributes to both diminished threat perception and devaluation of USFK, and encourages a set of trends that are developing to Pyongyang's advantage.

While we do not know for sure why Kim Jong Il agreed to a summit meeting with President Kim Dae Chung, available evidence suggests three principal factors: (1) his increased confidence that his aid-based survival strategy will work, at least in the near term, (2) his perception that he needed assistance badly and that he could get more, and get it faster, from the ROK than from any other source, and (3) his perception that in the Kim Dae Chung administration he would have a compliant partner in that President Kim had already talked about revising the National Security Law, a possible change in the status of USFK, and reunification based on a confederal system, and had referred to Kim Jong Il himself as a person with "a considerable degree of judgment, ability, and knowledge as a leader."<sup>51</sup>

In short, Kim Jong Il may have concluded that forces sympathetic to Communism and to collaboration with North Korea were gaining ground in the South and that Kim Jong Il was in a position to give them powerful assistance. In any case, the June summit meeting in Pyongyang has added a new dimension to the competition and reinforced some of the trends already identified. In the formal sense, the summit represents a forward step in that, unlike earlier North-South accords in 1972 and 1991, the

leaders of the ROK and North Korea in their official capacities signed the June agreement.

What is striking about the earlier agreements, however, is that a reading of each might cause one to wonder why any subsequent agreement covering essentially the same ground should be necessary. This illuminates one worrisome aspect of the recent summit. It is, after all, like past accords, only an agreement in principle, committing each side to little in the way of specifics. One suspects that it may ultimately fit the pattern of earlier agreements, when the first stage was agreement on a set of principles without specific commitments, the second was disagreement over correct interpretation of the principles, and the third was the breakup of the dialogue amid mutual recriminations and Pyongyang's accusations that the ROK had betrayed the spirit of the agreement.

Whether the present case will be an exception due to the North's economic plight remains to be seen. The North's need for assistance would appear to be an important new factor, but it is as yet uncertain whether Kim Jong Il is only after a quick kill prior to anticipated political changes in the United States and the ROK or whether he is prepared to manage over an extended period the balance between the need to obtain outside assistance and the need to maintain regime integrity.<sup>52</sup>

In any case, ROK reaction to the summit has been even more euphoric and unrealistic than the reaction to the widely hailed "breakthroughs" in 1972 and 1991. In spite of repeated cautionary statements by President Kim Dae Chung,<sup>53</sup> many have simply taken the summit as portrayed in the news media at face value, and assume that the North and the South are finally on the path to better relations and, ultimately, peaceful unification. This serves to solidify a kind of threat denial mindset already increasingly apparent in the ROK over the past decade.

Uninformed about North Korea's impressive military exercises this year, many Southerners wrongly assume that



economic failure has enfeebled the North's military to the point that it can no longer pose a threat to the South. Many see the "threat" as little more than a concoction of previous authoritarian regimes. Few are ready to seriously contemplate the horrendous possibility of another war on the peninsula. Most Koreans have no memory of, and little education about, the U.S. role in the Pacific War or the Korean War and tend to see U.S. forces more in terms of criminal jurisdiction and land issues. Finally, the pro-Pyongyang element in the ROK is much better organized and more effective than most South Koreans realize. This relates especially to ongoing agitation against USFK and to attacks on "conservatives" who take a cautious view of North-South reconciliation and advocate retention of USFK.<sup>54</sup> At this point few Koreans appear to grasp that the anti-USFK campaign is but the early stage of a broader campaign that will ultimately be anti-ROK.

Even if there were some uncertainty about Kim Jong II's intentions, his gains from the summit are readily apparent:

(1) Increased economic assistance. How much President Kim Dae Chung may have led Kim Jong II to expect is unknown, but according to the Ministry of Unification on July 6, 2000, ROK economic aid in the first half of the year was valued at \$67.2 million, up 48 percent from the same period last year; 85 percent of this total was government aid, including 200,000 tons of fertilizer in the April-June period, with another 100,000-ton shipment announced on July 26.

(2) Rehabilitation of Kim Jong II's personal image, as he became an overnight news media star in the ROK.

(3) Increasing calls for reduction or withdrawal of USFK.

The campaign against USFK relates to demands for revision of the United States-ROK Status of Forces Agreement and to mounting sensitivity to various frictions between the command and the host society, to include crime and environmental issues. It is also an issue that tends to fuse motives and interest groups, i.e., the desire to sell

newspapers and TV footage, the nationalistic passions of younger journalists, the prejudices of a xenophobic society with historical reasons for fear and suspicion of foreign influence, and the anti-USFK, anti-ROK objectives of leftists and pro-Pyongyang activists.

Kim Jong Il seems for the moment to have altered his tactical approach to the problem of USFK. In an interview on June 30, 2000, with a U.S. based journalist, Kim Jong Il observed that,

We have been telling the USFK to get out all this time, but . . . the United States must first change its own thinking. . . . The United States must itself figure out the USFK problem and make a bold decision that should substantially assist the unification of the Korean people.

As Seoul's Sogang University Professor Yi Sang U has pointed out, this remark should be seen in the context of an anti-USFK movement in the ROK that has already acquired significant momentum. By restraining his rhetoric, Kim Jong Il, in effect, defends this movement against the charge that it serves Pyongyang's cause. Rather than trying to pressure USFK out, he seeks to let the playing field tilt so that USFK may simply fall off.<sup>55</sup>

(4) Increasing ideological ferment and partisan strife in the ROK. While North Korean news media have stopped their attacks on the ROK government, they have continued harsh attacks against what they call "anti-unification" elements in the South, especially former President Kim Yong Sam, opposition Grand National Party head Yi Hoe Chang, and the Choson Ilbo, which appear aimed at taming conservative forces in the South. These attacks have sparked tense political disputes in the ROK, with the opposition accusing the Kim Dae Chung administration of being overly meek in response to Pyongyang's attacks.<sup>56</sup>

Conservatives also complain that in the rush toward engagement with the North, the accomplishments of an anti-Communist ROK over the past half century are now

being cavalierly dismissed even as progressives argue that preoccupation with what they call “Cold War” divisions will impede North-South reconciliation. While the charge by one opposition legislator that there are pro-North Korean figures in the Blue House may not represent a consensus even among conservatives at this point, conservatives are increasingly voicing suspicion that important information about North Korea and North-South relations is being withheld and that protecting the security of the ROK may not be getting its rightful priority. As all sides see these issues closely bound up with the critical question of who controls the country after the 2002 ROK presidential election, the ferment and strife are not likely to subside.

### The Policy Dilemmas.

For a realistic hope of fundamental policy change in Pyongyang it would seem that one must have either a plan to induce change in the KFR, which seems rather close to a political mission impossible, or a plan to force the KFR off stage, which doesn't look very easy either. Failing either of these, it would seem that we must take down the expectation of change as the central case for policymaking. Whatever inducements we may provide, the reality is that when we talk about fundamental change in North Korea, i.e., reform and opening on a significant scale, we are talking about undermining the regime. We don't always seem to understand this, but Kim Jong Il does.<sup>57</sup>

Since the nuclear issue emerged, we have tried by a number of means, such as the Agreed Framework, KEDO,<sup>58</sup> food aid, the four-party talks, missile talks, and the offer of normalized relations, to induce positive changes in North Korea. Despite the freezing of activity at Yongbyon and very limited North-South economic cooperation, it seems quite clear that the KFR remains all too aware that opening and reform will deal it a fatal blow. The reality seems to be that (1) despite external aid, the KFR cannot fix the economy without reform and cannot reform without undermining the

system; (2) the KFR will not bargain away its asymmetric advantages because they are fundamental to regime survival; (3) as the problem is one of substance, it will not likely be fixable by any new and imaginative structural devices; and (4) the so-called rational choice or soft landing idea is more of an evaporating hope than a viable policy.

The characteristics of what we may call the “post-soft landing delusion” phase would seem to reveal Pyongyang’s dilemma: (1) the more time passes, the more limited are the KFR’s strategic options; (2) with reform and opening ruled out, the regime has no choice but to seek aid from the ROK, the United States, Japan, and Europe, but even if it can tolerate dependence on its arch enemies in this manner, the more aid it takes, the less it will be able to cope on its own with its internal contradictions, so that preserving the status quo in this manner does nothing to dispel the specter of failure; and (3) in the meantime, the North’s asymmetric weapons programs will continue.

The dilemma this poses for us is that while decisive action to force the North to give up its WMD and missiles could lead to increased risk of war, or at least the perception of increased risk, inaction could mean that in a few years we could face an equally hostile enemy with even more menacing capabilities.

While it is arguable whether engagement provides the right environment for ROK economic recovery and buys time, the question is, *time for whom and for what?* If our policy is to offer rewards to North Korea in the hope of encouraging reform, abandonment of WMD, and North-South reconciliation, it would seem to have no prospect of success. There is nothing else wrong with it. It is certainly morally well grounded, but there seems little reason to believe that we can turn this tiger into a kitten by stroking it.

If, on the other hand, the objective is to preserve the status quo, the problem is that the status quo looks inherently unstable, as it means (1) continuing KFR

hostility to the ROK even if the North accepts Southern assistance, (2) bigger and better missiles and more WMD, (3) increasing North Korean dependence on outside aid, and (4) the danger that aid could be suspended at any point due to provocation by the North or due to a shift in the political power balance in one or more of the donor countries. This, it may be argued, is not movement toward resolution but rather a process of raising the stakes all around the table.<sup>59</sup>

Both Seoul's and Washington's policies have been attacked as grounded on unrealistic assumptions and as superficial demonstrations of problem management rather than actual problem solving. But one gets the impression that even those who criticize do not really grasp the difficulty of the problem—the depth, intensity, and necessity of KFR hostility to the ROK. The problem is not the inadequacy of the Agreed Framework or the failure of the four-party talks and engagement. Whatever one thinks of these devices, they are not the problem, but only symptoms of the problem.

The conclusion is not necessarily that those who urge diplomacy and engagement are wrong, and that those who urge strangulation are right. The conclusion is more basic: (1) that the regime in Pyongyang is locked on a course from which it cannot deviate without serious risk of fracture; (2) that the North's enormous internal contradictions and the anomic forces they may unleash mean that any policy, no matter how well thought out and how carefully crafted, will have only a very limited ability to influence Pyongyang or to provide us with a measure of control over events; and (3) that for better or worse, at some point in the not too distant future we could again transition from a pattern of incremental historical change to a moment of convulsive transformation.

A final word about USFK is in order. As noted above, Pyongyang frequently accuses us of trying to stifle the North. We don't think that way, and North Korea's force deployments (and defectors' reports) do not indicate that

Kim Jong Il expects attack. Nevertheless the combination of an increasingly wealthy ROK backed up by U.S. military power is a threat to the whole Kim family system, because it tends to confine North-South competition to the economic dimension in which the ROK is unquestionably superior.

Euphoria in the ROK over the June 2000 summit (there's been little media coverage in the North in the aftermath of the summit) has generated an atmosphere in which both Korean and American publicists could well come to view reduction or withdrawal of USFK as necessary to sustain an unfolding process of reconciliation. Some might even come to argue that USFK is a barrier to the start of such a process. If this argument dictates events and should USFK be withdrawn, we can imagine two sets of judgments by future historians. If the North-South confrontation should ultimately be resolved by peaceful means, the decision to withdraw will, at worst, be seen as an unwise risk that we nevertheless got away with. If, as seems more likely in view of North Korea's continuing military preparations, a decision to withdraw leads to another disastrous and heartrending Korean conflict, that decision will stand out as a piece of spectacular folly in hindsight's pitiless gaze.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 2

1. The names of Korean places and names (except for some such as ROK President Kim Dae Jung, North Korea's Kim Il Sung, and his son Kim Jong Il) are Romanized in accordance with the McCune-Reischauer system, less diacritical marks.

2. The term "Kim family regime" is applied for three reasons. First, many of the regime's elite are related by blood or by marriage. Second, because, as explained in section II, the regime operates much like a crime family. Third, because we have witnessed one "dynastic succession," and there are reports that another is contemplated.

3. For a recent reaffirmation of this view, see "If we fight against the imperialists, we will live. If we succumb to them we will die," *Nodong Sinmun*, May 12, 2000. The article attributes this insight to "the great leader comrade Kim Jong Il."

4. Adrian Buso, *Guerrilla Dynasty*, Westview Press, 1999, p. 241.

5. Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, University of California Press, 1972.

6. *Ibid.*, p.783.

7. See also Suck Ho Lee, *Party-Military Relations in North Korea*, Research Center for Peace and Unification of Korea, 1989, especially pp. 231-251.

8. This point need not draw us deep into the study of myth. In his *Theorizing Myth*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 17, Bruce Lincoln makes the point that,

In Homer, mythos often denotes what it normally does in Hesiod: a blunt and aggressive act of candor, uttered by powerful males in the heat of battle or agonistic assembly.

Lincoln cites statistics provided by Richard P. Martin in *The Language of Heroic Speech and Performance in the Iliad*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989, indicating that 93 percent of the time that "mythos" or the verb "mytheomai" appears in the *Iliad*, the situation is one in which a powerful male either gives orders or makes boasts. In this context, "mythos" is always a speech of power, performed at length in public, by one in a position of authority. Normally it forces assent from those addressed, and only those equal in status to the speaker are free to contest a proclamation that represents itself as something to be believed and obeyed. Lincoln goes on to make the point that in the epic "mythos" did not mean "symbolic story" or "false story" or anything of the sort. Nevertheless, the comparison with 20th century totalitarian states, which have exploited falsehood on a mass scale, is intriguing. The Swedish philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who died the year Kim Il Sung was installed by the Soviets in Pyongyang, pointed out in his *Myth of the State*, 1946, that in our own great technical age myths are manufactured just like any other weapon, e.g., machine-guns or artillery pieces. This is more like the style of the Pyongyang regime.

9. Paektu-san, on the North Korean-Chinese border, is the highest mountain in Korea (2,744 meters), and the site where a deity is said to have descended to earth and begotten Korea's mythical founder, Tan'gun. It is thus sacred to Koreans in both North and South.

10. A recent example was an April 19, 2000, Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) broadcast in English, which cited double rainbows in

the sky on April 14-15 as proof that Kim Il Sung was a "peerlessly great man born of heaven."

11. Enunciated by the Athenians when they occupied the island of Mytilene 428-427 B.C. during the Peloponnesian War. A line in a Japanese popular song of the 1880s may be even more to the point: "There is a Law of Nations, it is true, /but when the moment comes, remember, /the strong eat up the weak." John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, Norton, p. 21.

12. Haggard, a practicing barrister in 19th century London, authored sensational books such as *She*, *Dawn*, and *King Solomon's Mines*.

13. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, address to troops in Korea's DMZ, February 22, 1997, as released by the Office of the State Department spokesman in Seoul.

14. This does not mean that they will not meet formally with ROK official counterparts, as they did in 1972, 1991-92, and the June 2000 summit, when they calculate that it is to their advantage to do so. This does not mean a readiness to accept the ideological and moral legitimacy of the ROK. For Pyongyang's view of negotiations as a form of combat, see Chuck Downs, *Over the Line: North Korea's Negotiating Strategy*, Washington, DC: The AEI Press, 1999.

15. *Time*, May 22, 1995, p.32.

16. Promulgated by Kim Il Sung, *chuch'e* is a political ideology that applies Marxism-Leninism to the North Korean culture. "Based on autonomy and self-reliance, *chuch'e* has been popularized since 1955 as an official guideline for independence in politics, economics, national defense, and foreign policy." Mattes Savada, ed., *North Korea: A Country Study*, 4th edition, Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1994 (Headquarters, Department of the Army, DA Pam 550-81), p. 324.

17. This is why we cannot expect Pyongyang to pay much attention to Seoul's assurances that the South has no intent to absorb the North. The threat of absorption does not stem from ROK government intentions any more than absorption in Germany came about because of West German intentions.

18. The CFC is the ROK-U.S. warfighting component established in 1978 and headed by a U.S. four-star general who is directed by the National Command and Military Authorities of the United States and



ROK. He concurrently commands the United Nations Command (UNC) and United States Forces Korea (USFK).

19. North Korea's total artillery pieces are estimated at 12,000.

20. FEBAs are concentric defense lines clearly observable south of the DMZ but not in the North.

21. The foregoing data derive from an unclassified, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence J2, USFK, North Korea Threat Briefing, May 2000.

22. See Gordon W. Prange, *While We Slept*, McGraw-Hill, 1981, pp. 34-36, 124-126. In his incredibly detailed account of the Pearl Harbor operation, Prange explains that U.S. leaders went astray through overconfidence in Pearl's defenses and underestimation of Admiral Yamamoto's imagination and will.

23. Assassination and kidnapping within the ROK are extremely rare, but there are occasional suspicious cases. On the night of February 15, 1997, an unidentified gunman shot Yi Han Yong at the doorway of an apartment where he was staying in Pundang, southern Seoul. Yi died 11 days later. Yi, who defected in 1982, was the nephew of Song Hye Im, mother of Kim Jong Il's oldest son. Yi, whose real name was Yi Il Nam, allowed his defection to be made public only after Song Hye Im and her sister, Yi's mother, reportedly disappeared from their Moscow apartment in early 1996. Yi's killer has not been found, but it is theorized that he was killed by North Korean agents in retaliation for the Song sisters' case and a critical book Yi had written about Kim Jong Il. While there is no proof, the case has reportedly had an intimidating effect on conservative writers in the ROK who might otherwise publicly criticize Kim Jong Il.

24. This does not mean that all complaints by Southern groups over these issues are directed by Pyongyang, but, justified or not, agitation of this kind contributes to Pyongyang's objectives.

25. The North will also propagandize for "confederal unification"—one country, two systems—but it does not appear that this idea will have credibility or practical application in the predictable future.

26. This does not mean that North Korea will not make tactical concessions from time to time by slowing or suspending some of its weapons programs, but there is a difference between suspending a program and abandoning it. Moreover, the ability to monitor

underground nuclear weapons development and other underground WMD activities from outside North Korea is limited, to say the least.

27. This is what defectors have told us. See, for example, statements by defector Kim Yong Song near the end of Kim Tong Hyon's article, "North Korea Must Go To War," *Monthly Choson*, April 1994.

28. Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East, the Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age*, HarperCollins, 1999.

29. Cited in Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Vol. II, University of California Press, 1972, p. 1332.

30. See Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung, the North Korean Leader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, pp. 256-257.

31. See the section, 'Kim Jong II, a Hamlet with Doubts,' in Cho Kap Che's chapter, "The Information War with North Korea," *Monthly Choson*, September 1990, for information on a tape of a conversation with Kim Jong II brought out by ROK film director Sin Sang Ok when he escaped from North Korean control in 1986. On the tape Kim Jong II can be heard admitting that, in spite of 30 years of socialism, "We're bogged down in our own contradictions" and "cannot even feed our people and provide them a living unless we rely on the western world."

32. See "Putin's Visit to North Korean Brings New Power Paradigm to Peninsula," *Seoul Yonhap* in English, July 21, 2000.

33. See "Cohen Doubts North Korean Missile Offer," July 25, 2000, online at <http://www.usdefense.com>.

34. We are, of course, cognizant of expectations on the part of some observers that Kim Jong II will fall victim to a military coup. Suck Ho Lee explains at some length why this does not appear likely. He notes that one can hardly point to a military coup in a Communist country and attributes this to the fact that in Communist countries, the Party is sovereign and the military learn the Party's ideology. In his comparative study of the military in the USSR, China, and North Korea, he finds that in North Korea the military were never abused by the top leader as in the USSR, and never played an independent political role as in China, but rather have always stood squarely and monolithically in support of Kim Il Sung and his son. See Lee, pp. 231-251.

35. Testimony, March 7, 2000, before Senate Armed Services Committee by General Thomas A. Schwartz, Commander in Chief, UNC/CFC/USFK.

36. Assistant Chief of Staff J2, USFK, Unclassified North Korea Threat Briefing, May 2000.

37. See, for example, Kim Myong Chol, "U.S. Will End Up in a Shotgun Marriage with DPRK," Nautilus Policy Forum, October 22, 1999, [www.nautilus.org](http://www.nautilus.org). Kim, former editor of *People's Korea* in Tokyo, argues that to remove the Cold War structure means to end or neutralize the American involvement in Korea, including its military presence.

38. It is interesting that, while many call for removal of the "Cold War structure" in Korea, the term is seldom defined. Most seem to use it without explanation. To some, the term conjures up recollections that somehow on the flight home from World War II, Korea got caught in a badminton game between the United States and the USSR, and ended up devastated and divided as a result of a proxy war between the two superpowers. Historical evidence, however, would suggest that three factors made Korea a part of the Cold War. The first was Kim Il Sung's belief that unification by war under his command was essential to his own goal of becoming the leader of a united peninsula. The second was that Stalin came to believe that war in Korea would prevent rapprochement between China and the United States. The third was Truman's perception that the North Korean invasion in 1950 was part of Stalin's strategy for global domination, and that by intervening in Korea he could prevent a third world war. There is no compelling reason to believe that Truman would have intervened had he not so believed. If we accept recent scholarship indicating that the Korean War was first and foremost the product of Kim Il Sung's appetite for the ROK rather than the proxy war we imagined for so long, then the "Cold War structure" can be seen as the result of a Munich-oriented Western response, i.e., intervention to stop aggression in the embryo stage by defending the ROK. Thus it was none other than Kim Il Sung himself who became the great architect of the U.S. military presence in Korea, but this, of course, meant the frustration of his plan to become ruler of "One Korea." Viewed in this way, "Cold War" meant defense of the ROK. There is no reason to believe the ROK would exist today if Korea had not become a part of the "Cold War." If one believes that this should not have happened, that unification under Kim Il Sung would have been preferable to continued division, and that unification under the current Kim family group is still the preferred option, then ending the "Cold War structure" naturally becomes a code word for removing USFK and dismantling the ROK-U.S. alliance so as to realize this objective at long last. When Kim Jong Il and his apologists talk about the "Cold War structure," they understand all this. They mean, "get rid of USFK." What others mean is not always so clear.

39. See, for example, Joel Wit, "Clinton and North Korea: Past Present, and Future," Nautilus Policy Forum Online, March 1, 2000, in which the author suggests that

the changes the U.S. seeks in North Korea's security posture—its foregoing weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles and ultimately reductions in its conventional forces—are only possible if accompanied by changes in the U.S. posture on the peninsula.

40. It is conceivable, of course, that governments in Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo might prefer not to face up to the implications of their intelligence. So-called intelligence failures are sometimes really failures of will and judgment at the level of government or high command. Two notable instances of this occurred in 1940 when the Belgian government could not make a decision to allow French forces to enter Belgium even though they believed reports of an impending German attack, and when the French Commander in Chief, General Maurice Gamelin, ignored reports that the Germans had opted to make their main thrust through the Ardennes rather than further North. See William L. Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic*, Simon and Schuster, 1969, chapter 28.

41. This applies to top level leadership, as exemplified by the abrupt decision to reverse course and join the United Nations when it became apparent China would not use its veto to block ROK admission. It does not, of course, apply to the North's negotiators, who normally must seek instructions from Pyongyang regarding even small details.

42. Nicholas Eberstadt, *The End of North Korea*, Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1999, p. 71.

43. President-elect Kim Dae Jung visited the ROK Navy Fleet Command, the ROK Air Force Fighter Command, and CFC on January 5, 1998, to review defense readiness and ROK-U.S. military cooperation. At CFC, according to Yonhap News Agency, Kim said, "U.S. soldiers stationed here not only prevent a war on the Korean peninsula from breaking out but also contribute to the peace and security of Northeast Asia." In addition, next day editions of the *Joongang Ilbo*, p. 2, the *Donga Ilbo*, p. 4, and the *Hankyoreh Sinmun* on line all quote Kim as saying during his CFC visit that "U.S. forces must remain in the ROK even after unification." Two points would seem in order about these comments. First, President Kim would not appear to agree that North Korea is no longer an enemy, as some who advocate scrapping the National Security Law insist, as his statement implies that the North might attack if USFK were not present. Second, Kim seems to presume

unification under the ROK, as it is hard to imagine the North's leaders opting for a USFK presence. This implied presumption, of course, will likely come across to Pyongyang as inconsistent with Kim's assurances that no absorption is intended.

44. Lee, of course, does not point out that the U.S. war against North Korea stemmed from the North's attack on the ROK. Neither does he subject the two opposite threat perceptions he outlines to the test of history. USFK did not attack the North during the several decades when the North had no WMD capability, but North Korea did attack in 1950 after U.S. forces were withdrawn. Lee glosses over the difficulty of negotiating with North Korea about a reliable arrangement for general arms reduction and verification of WMD dismantling. He also glosses over the practical reality that the North's WMD and conventional capabilities could be quickly and easily reconstituted, while the reintroduction of USFK would be problematic, to say the least.

45. *Mal* is a monthly magazine founded by dissident journalists and published in Seoul.

46. The daily official organ of the Korean Workers' Party.

47. Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is, of course, the North's official name. Except where in a quotation, we have used throughout this paper "North Korea" as synonymous with DPRK.

48. Richard K. Betts, "The New Threat of Mass Destruction," *Foreign Affairs*, January-February, 1998. Betts notes that biological weapons are apt to be the weapon of choice because they are easy to get, like chemicals, but have mass killing power, like nuclear weapons. He cites a 1993 study by the U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment indicating that a single airplane delivering 100 kilograms of anthrax spores by aerosol on a clear night over the Washington, DC, area could kill between one million and three million people.

49. See "Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the Geopolitics of Terror," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 1, 1998. The article noted that the launch of Pakistan's *Ghauri Hatf-V* 1,500-km-range SSM in April 1998, Iran's *Shahab-3* 1,300-km-SSM in July 1998, and North Korea's three-stage *Taepodong* rocket in August 1998 all pointed to enhanced ability to use force and threats to achieve political goals. *Jane's* also observed that the devastating psychological effect of such weapons is enhanced if the victim is also suffering military reverses, as in the case of Iran.

50. Richard Preston, "The Bioweaponers," *The New Yorker*, March 9, 1998, p. 58. Should Kim Jong Il make the big use-or-lose decision with regard to his burdensomely expensive but still powerful military establishment, we might learn a lot more about these performance characteristics than we would like to know. For an alarming but realistic treatment of "asymmetric warfare" and "catastrophic terrorism," see Tom Mangold and Jeff Goldberg, *The Plague Wars*, St. Martin's Press, 1999. The hugely disruptive impact of biological warfare in the event of renewed hostilities in Korea and the difficulty the intelligence community faces in assessing North Korea's biological weapons capabilities are covered in Chapter 31, pp. 322-334.

51. See February 28, 2000, interview with *Der Spiegel* cited in an article by Professor Yang Hung Mo, formerly of Songgyungkwan University, in Seoul, *Pukhan Magazine*, July 1, 2000, pp. 18-23, for an analysis of Kim Jong Il's reasons for agreeing to a summit.

52. The announcement on July 25, 2000, that Kim Jong Il has approved Hyundai Asan's plan to build an industrial complex in Haeju would suggest that the latter is more likely.

53. See *The Korea Times*, July 20, 2000, p. 2, for an article reporting that President Kim Dae Chung told the *Los Angeles Times* in an interview published the same date that

I don't think there are too many people who are naïve enough to believe that things will progress relatively easily with the North.

54. In his *Monthly Choson*, July 1, 2000, article, ROK Army Lieutenant General Kim Hui Sang, Superintendent of the ROK National Defense College, notes that,

On a television talk show a while ago in connection with the recent summit meeting, several participants, including a clergyman and a professor, obstinately called for the withdrawal of USFK, an issue that had nothing to do with the theme of the talk show. A professor who objected to their argument was reportedly harassed in his car for about 30 minutes, surrounded by some student demonstrators who were at the talk show as observers.

See "Leading Figures Should Step Forward Against Pro-DPRK Instigators," *Monthly Choson*, July 1, 2000, pp. 167-171.

55. See "Kim Jong Il's Remark on USFK Examined," *Monthly Choson*, August 1, 2000, pp. 62-66.

56. See "More Subdued North Korean Media Still Capable of Stinging Attacks," *The Korea Herald*, July 17, 2000, p. 2.

57. We do not, of course, rule out practical changes such as incentives for farmers and a shift in emphasis from corn to potato farming, or a carefully controlled connection to the Internet. We are talking about *fundamental* changes, such as abandonment of the goal of "liberating" the South, which would impact on the core of the belief system.

58. The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, established as the management structure to oversee construction of two nuclear power stations in North Korea in accordance with the Agreed Framework.

59. We are not unmindful of the June 2000 North-South summit, but Pyongyang's need for immediate help in the form of energy, fertilizer, and fuel, and Seoul's need for vindication of its policies, do not, at least at this stage of the game, add up to a convincing case for reconciliation.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE NORTH KOREAN VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr.  
Sharon A. Richardson

Authors' Note: All too frequently students and analysts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) view its actions and intentions from their own individual or nationalistic perspectives rather than that of the DPRK leadership itself. This chapter is an imaginary report delivered by an intimate of the Kim family regime, expressed in the tone, texture, and rhetorical stance one could realistically expect of such a perspective. While some of what is written cannot be proven by hard data, it all lies within the realm of reasonable possibility. It is our sincerest hope that this chapter will stimulate discussion and provide the reader with a modest understanding of our view of the way the DPRK leadership thinks.

#### Report to the National Defense Commission: Development of Strategic Weapon Systems at the Dawn of a New Century

#### Introduction.

As the new millennium dawns, we are on the threshold of a great new era in our 5,000-year history. The death of our Great Leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung, was a tremendous blow not only to the DPRK, but also to all peace-loving citizens of the world. Comrade Kim Jong Il has most ably



carried on, and, indeed, built upon the works of his and the nation's father. We are moving from a restrained position to a more prominent and rightful place in the world. The leader in the South, Kim Dae Jung, has asked to visit the DPRK to discuss matters of a wide-ranging interest and we have complied with his request. Many issues remain between us and those in the South, but we will proceed with the meeting. We shall be cautious in our discussions considering reconciliation and the unification of our glorious Fatherland and we shall accomplish this without outside interference.

*Chuch'e* has given our people the strength to build a powerful state by our own efforts<sup>1</sup>. Our diplomatic initiatives are bearing fruit and will provide us with increasing connections with other nations. New ties will bring new opportunities, yet we must be aware of the dangers of falling into economic servitude and dependence on economic trade with others. We must ensure that we trade using the principle of equality. We will trade only for what we need in order to maintain a self-supporting economy and not become economically subservient to another country. According to the teachings of our Dear Leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il:

In order to thwart the dominationist machinations of the imperialists and reactionaries and give a strong impetus to the people's cause of independence, the cause of socialism, we must maintain the *chuch'e* character of the revolutionary struggle and construction and sustain their national character. Preserving these qualities is imperative for the independent development of the country and nation and for success in realizing independence for the popular masses. Past experience and lessons have proved that adherence to the *chuch'e* character and national character is the key to success in the revolution and construction and vital to national prosperity.

Under the wise leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, our Party and our people have resolutely maintained the *chuch'e* character and national character in opposition to imperialism and dominationism throughout the entire period of

the revolutionary struggle. As a result, they have achieved an independent development of the country and nation without any deviation and have won brilliant victory in the revolution and construction.

## National Security Policy, Strategy and Doctrine.

Long ago our Great Leader Kim Il Sung established the two eminent underlying principles of our national security—the survival of the Fatherland, and the liberation of the entire Fatherland (One Choson). We are resolute and determined to fight to the death to achieve these two principles. We openly declare that we will mercilessly fight against the United States imperialists and all the class enemies to the last drop of our blood. We will fight to the end, and even if we lose and half our people die, they will not win the hearts and minds of our people.

Our Great Leader Kim Il Sung has likewise given form to these principles in the national military policies of the “Four Military Lines” and “Three Revolutionary Forces.” Reflecting these principles and policies, and with the guidance of our Dear Leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il, the Korean People’s Army (KPA) has developed a strategy based upon two principles—the defense of the Fatherland through total resistance by the KPA and the people to any enemy, and the complete reunification of the Fatherland within 30 days of the onset of hostilities.

Our KPA will achieve its goal of reunification of the Fatherland by combining “two front war” and “combined operations” utilizing overwhelming firepower and violence under the banner of “One Blow Non-stop Attack.” As directed by our Dear Leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il, it will “Occupy South Korea, All the Way to Pusan, in Three Days.”

The KPA will achieve these noble missions through the revolutionary strength of its troops fighting with the spirit of the people. Each KPA soldier is a match for 100 enemy soldiers as they are filled with the spirit of human bombs, warriors of guns and bombs, and heroes of self-destruction

dedicated to the defense of our respected and beloved Comrade Kim Jong Il and filled with a do-or-die spirit.

It is with the highest sense of duty and honor that the Second Economic Committee provides the Korean People's Army with the tools it requires to fulfill its glorious and victorious destiny.<sup>2</sup>

To defend our Fatherland, as well as reunite with our oppressed kindred in the South, we have been engaged in the development and production of strategic weapons systems in four broad areas—missiles, chemical, biological, and nuclear. We have been successful in our efforts based upon the brilliant directions and revolutionary spirit of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung who has taught us that,

We must strongly fortify the KPA with modern weapons and combat material. We must employ all means to modernize the weapons and make them more powerful based on the successes of ultra-modern science and technology. . . . In modernizing the KPA and developing military science and technology, we must fully consider the reality of our country with its numerous mountains and lengthy coastline. . . . We must develop and introduce military science and technology in accordance with the reality of our country and correctly incorporate old style weapons along with modern weapons.

During the past 10 years, our progress has been meritorious. It has not only provided the KPA with the tools it needs to deter the imperialist aggressors, but has furnished the Fatherland with significant diplomatic leverage. Under the direction of our Dear Leader Kim Jong Il, we have utilized this leverage to force the international community to recognize our rightful place. We are now at the point where the United States, Russia, China, and Japan dare not formulate any policies for East Asia without considering our demands. We have also utilized this newly achieved leverage to manipulate our enemies, especially the United States, into loosening trade sanctions, providing economic assistance, and contributing emergency fuel and food assistance.

In achieving these objectives we have made several minor concessions regarding our weapons development and production programs. Included among these have been the freezing of the nuclear program at Yongbyon, suspension of ballistic missile testing, and providing the United States access to the strategic complex at Kumch'ang-ni. Under the brilliant direction of our Dear Leader Kim Jong Il we have, however, utilized these concessions to our great advantage, while at the same time encouraging the ignorance and arrogance of our enemies.

As the members of the National Defense Commission are aware, this last aspect of "encouraging the ignorance and arrogance of our enemies" was first outlined by our Great Leader Kim Il Sung in his great treatise on the "Four Military Lines" 40 years ago. Since that time, it has remained an underlying principle in our production of strategic weapons. We allow our enemies to know only what we want them to know—a very small amount—about our capabilities, practicing deception, misdirection, and misinformation in all phases. At the same time we continue to develop and expand our true capabilities in secret. In doing so, we foster within their political, military, and intelligence circles an erroneous picture of our spiritual and physical strength. This ignorance and presumptuousness of our enemies can be ranked as one of the greatest successes of the Second Economic Committee.

As our great nation stands on the threshold of a new millennium, we are poised to make prodigious leaps forward in the development and production of strategic weapons systems. These developments will ensure the security of our Fatherland and propel our Dear Leader and Chu'che thought to the forefront of the international community.

Ballistic Missiles.

In accordance with our primary objectives to reunify the Fatherland while defending it from outside interference and aggression, our ballistic missile program has become a

cornerstone. It provides us with the capability to deter our enemies, deter others who might support our enemies in attacking us, inflict punishing damage upon anyone who would dare attack, and dramatically increases the KPA's ability to reunite the Fatherland in a "One Blow Non-stop Attack" when directed to do so by our Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il. The ballistic missile program has also increased our international prestige and provided valuable foreign currency as other nations have sought out our assistance and missiles as they develop their own deterrence against imperialist aggression. Most notable have been our like-minded associates in Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, and Syria.

During the past 15 years, ballistic missile development has progressed steadily. Utilizing the spirit of *Chu'che*, we have continually increased the range and enlarged the payload capabilities of our systems. First, we progressed from the production of simple copies of the Scud to more capable short-range ballistic missiles such as the *Hwasong 5* and *Hwasong 6*. Next, we developed a medium range ballistic missile known to the world as the *No-dong 1*. Guided by the spirit of *chuch'e*, we then combined our existing systems to create an even longer-ranged medium range ballistic missile known to the world as the *Taep'o-dong 1*. This was achieved in record time and far exceeded the expectations of the world.

At the brilliant direction of our Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il, we then utilized this system to create the space launch vehicle to launch our first satellite —the *Kwangmyongsong 1*. This same launch vehicle, when configured as a weapon system, becomes an intermediate range ballistic missile possessing a range in excess of 4,000 km, thereby providing us, for the first time in the glorious history of the Korean people, the capability to directly strike at Alaska, the territory of the U.S. imperialists. Our most advanced system, known to the world as the *Taep'o-dong 2*, has even greater capabilities. Depending upon the size of the payload this system becomes an intercontinental

ballistic missile capable of striking at the very heartland of the United States. This is a glorious testimony to the strength of *chuch'e* and the glorious and penetrating leadership of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung and Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il.

In pursuing our ballistic missile program, we have developed a production infrastructure that is second only to that of the United States, China, and Russia. In line with our Great Leader's teachings on the "Four Great Military Lines," we have dispersed the research, production, and basing facilities throughout the Fatherland to minimize the impact of any imperialist U.S. attack. This has also enhanced our abilities with regard to strategic deception, misdirection, and misinformation. It is clear that, because of this most excellent strategy, our enemies do not have a clear understanding of our capabilities. In fact, their obsession with the Musudan-ri Launch and Sanum-dong Research Facilities has blinded them. We will continue to encourage this.

If pressed, and if critical components are available, we are capable of producing 5 to 15 ballistic missiles per month, depending upon the version selected. If required, and with the financial support of our foreign friends, this capacity could be doubled within a year's time to fulfill their legitimate defensive needs and increase our foreign sales.

During the past 10 years, we have been utilizing a significant portion of our production capability to remanufacture and upgrade our older systems to more modern standards. As a result, our ballistic missile

Type	Number
Short range (old and remanufactured)	500
Medium range	80
Intermediate range and space launch vehicles	15
Intercontinental range	5

inventory has remained at a relatively constant level of 600 systems. These can be broken down as shown in above table.

This inventory meets or exceeds the KPA's requirements for operations against the Southern lackeys. It does not, however, meet the projected requirements for operations against the mainland of either Japan or the United States. Within 2 years, the current program of remanufacturing and upgrading older systems will be able to address the requirement for Japan. The U.S. requirement will, however, require an estimated 10 years. If, however, our Libyan or Iranian friends continue to purchase our longer-range missile systems, they may be induced to flight test them. This would provide us with data to refine them at an accelerated pace.

We have faced numerous technical obstacles in the production of our ballistic missile systems. These have centered around six critical areas:

- (1) general and specialized ballistic missile design expertise,
- (2) guidance systems,
- (3) engine development,
- (4) warhead and nosecone design,
- (5) acquisition of specialized materials and components, and
- (6) financial support.

To date, we have been able to meet our basic needs in these areas; however, the continued growth of the ballistic missile program is dependent upon more comprehensive and long-term solutions. Fortunately, thanks to the strength of *chuch'e* thought and the guidance of our Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il, we have been making significant progress. Under the guidance of Chinese, Russian, and Ukrainian missile experts, our designers and technicians continue to develop their own skills. Our

Chinese neighbors continue their covert assistance to our missile program, providing education for our people and critical components and materials. This is especially true within the areas of guidance systems, satellites, and advanced warhead design, including decoys and countermeasures. Our friends in the Middle East and South Asia also have proven to be invaluable to our ballistic missile program. They continue to provide us with valuable foreign currency as they purchase our missile technology and components, access to western technologies and components denied us by trade sanctions, and a means to test our missile systems with low political risks and little interference from the United States and the international community. Our cooperation with Iran also extends to their interests in satellites. Our covert acquisition programs within Russia and Eastern Europe have produced important results within the areas of propulsion systems and acquisition of specialized components.

Looking forward over the next 10 to 15 years, we will focus upon improving the range to weight capabilities of our existing systems, improving guidance systems, developing new warheads with advanced decoy and countermeasure systems, launching both research (the *Kwangmyongsong 2*) and reconnaissance satellites, increasing the survivability of our missile force by the expansion of hardened storage facilities, continuing the development of unique launch platforms (especially those mounted upon rail cars and cargo ships), and the accelerated development of a short-range solid-fuel ballistic missile.

Our successes and future plans within the missile program are tempered by the huge financial burden they have placed upon us. They have forced us, at times, to make critical decisions on which paths to pursue. Through continued foreign sales of missile systems and technologies, we plan to address this situation and enhance our access to missile related technologies and components.



At the political level, under the guidance of our Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il, we will continue to utilize our ballistic missile program to confound our enemies, encourage their arrogance, influence the ongoing international negotiations, and increase the glory of *chuch'e* thought and our Fatherland.

An excellent example of how the missile program has achieved many of these goals in the past was the launching of our first satellite—the *Kwangmyongsong 1*—in 1998. This launch caused great panic and confusion for the U.S. imperialists, their Southern puppets, their Japanese toadies, and others in the international community. The United States had previously believed we would not be able to achieve such a capability until sometime around 2005. The possibility that we might follow this with a test launch of our intermediate range ballistic missile spurred the United States to diplomatic and political action. They quickly agreed to lift some trade sanctions if we agreed to a suspension of further missile testing. This was accompanied by complete consternation in that country which has caused it to resolutely consider a national missile defense system.

Our missiles have caused the “mighty superpower” to consider deployment of a national missile defense that will be enormously expensive, and, in the end, will fail. This failure will come on both technical and political levels. Within the technical realm, there are numerous rudimentary methods with which to counter the imperialists’ missile defense system. With assistance from our Chinese friends, we are at the stage where we can now introduce these countermeasures into our current inventory with little or no effect on performance or degradation of our capabilities. With the implementation of any of these countermeasures, the imperialists must expend tremendous financial and political resources to counter them. If we are careful, we can reveal these new countermeasures in a phased manner, thereby keeping the imperialists’ missile defense effort in a state of “catch up” for many years. More significantly, the U.S. imperialists, once

again, fail to understand the political nature of our struggle. While there is little doubt that for the next 15-20 years the United States has the capability to eventually deploy the technical means to counter most of our missiles, we will be victorious if only one out of a hundred of our missiles lands within their homeland!

Furthermore, the U.S. imperialists' efforts to deploy a national missile defense system have angered our Russian and Chinese friends and their own allies. For Russia, a U.S. national missile defense system means that it must amend or abrogate their mutual antiballistic missile (ABM) treaty. For the Chinese, it means that they would have to greatly expand their strategic missile forces. In both instances, it has resulted in the increased willingness of both Russia and China to share ballistic missile, satellite, and space-related technologies with us, and has decreased their willingness to bring political pressure upon us to curtail or suspend our ballistic missile program. We must expend great effort politically to both utilize this situation to our advantage and to increase the friction between the U.S. imperialists and our Russian and Chinese friends. With regard to its allies, the United States has stated it will share its new missile defense technology with them. Those same allies, members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations (UN) are, however, looking at the United States with suspicion and distrust regarding the issue, and rightfully so. As with the friction between the U.S. imperialists and our Russian and Chinese friends, we should do everything within our power on the political front to encourage dissension between the United States and its allies. If we are successful, this entire issue is likely to result in the decoupling of the imperialists and their allies with the end result of a much weaker foe.

All of this consternation comes in response to our launching a single satellite! Surely, by any means of measurement, it was a tremendous success as demonstrated by the great commotion experienced by our adversaries. It wondrously demonstrates the greatness of

our national power and the brilliance of our Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il. As Sun Tzu has taught,

What is of supreme importance is to attack the enemy's strategy;  
Next best is to disrupt his alliances . . .  
Thus, those skilled in battle subdue the enemy's army without battle.

## Chemical and Biological Weapons.

Immediately following the Fatherland Liberation War, at the direction of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung, we embarked upon the development of biological and chemical weapons. Although we are a peace-loving people, we were forced into this unfortunate situation by the barbaric use of these weapons against us during the war by the imperialist United States. Since that time, the wisdom of this decision has been repeatedly reinforced as the United States and its Southern lackeys have continued to threaten us with the use of these cruel and inhumane weapons.

Progress within the chemical weapons field advanced slowly due to the need to rebuild the nation and care for our people. Through the selfless sacrifice of our people and the strength of *chuch'e* thought, we produced our first experimental chemical weapons during the late 1950s and early 1960s. By the late 1960s, pilot production of several chemical agents had commenced. Since that time our chemical weapons program has unceasingly improved, and our chemical weapons production capability has now matured. We currently possess the capability to produce a wide range of chemical weapons, including the feared binary weapons. Chemical weapons are a vital weapon in the KPA's great inventory for both victoriously triumphing over any interfering aggressors and ensuring the reunification of the Fatherland under the banner of "One Blow Non-stop Attack."

In his treatise on the "Three Revolutionary Forces" our Great Leader Kim Il Sung declared,

The Korean Workers' Party and the Korean people will make every effort to strengthen their solidarity with the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the future as in the past and will positively support their struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

In line with this direction, during the 1980s we began exchanging chemical weapons technology and weapons first with Iran and then Syria and Libya. Most recently we have expanded these exchanges to include Pakistan. These activities have provided us with valuable foreign currency and access to technologies denied us by the onerous sanctions unfairly imposed upon us by the imperialist United States and their flunkies in the international community. Our efforts to covertly obtain chemical warfare research and technologies within the former Soviet Union have proven to be unorganized but moderately successful, but they have also proven to be very expensive. Future efforts will have to weigh the value of what we can covertly obtain against the limited financial resources we are able to dedicate to this mission.

In pursuing our chemical weapons program, we have the directions of our Great Leader's treatise on the "Four Great Military Lines." We have dispersed the research, production, and basing facilities throughout the Fatherland to minimize the impact of any imperialist U.S. attack. They are thus hardened and redundant. As with the missile and nuclear programs, dispersion has also enhanced our abilities with regard to strategic deception, misdirection, and misinformation. An unfortunate aspect of this is that we must continue to work on our chemical weapons program in secret and publicly deny any such capabilities. The wisdom and validity of this strategy of deception is apparent by the wide range of estimates of our chemical capabilities by the United States. We will continue to encourage this.

We are currently capable of producing a wide variety of chemical agents including: adamsite (DM), chloroacetophenone (CN), chlorobenzylidene malononitrile

(CS), hydrogen cyanide (AC), mustard-family (H or HD), phosgene (CG and CX), sarin (GB), soman (GD), tabun (GA), and V-agents (VM and VX). For a variety of operational and technical reasons, we have concentrated upon mustard, phosgene, sarin, and the V-agents. Since the production of soman (GD) requires the use of pinacolyl alcohol, which is currently produced by only a few companies around the world in extremely small amounts and has no commercial uses, we would find it inconvenient to import this chemical without arousing suspicion. During the past 10 years, we have begun production of binary agents and, with the assistance of technologies gathered in Russia and China, have begun working on third generation chemical agents. These agents, due to their greater safety of handling in transit and longer period of stability in storage, greatly enhance the KPA's capability to distribute them utilizing highly-trained and dedicated reconnaissance and sniper troops and intelligence operatives.

Our annual production level for chemical weapons has varied considerably during the past 10 years due to the natural disasters and economic hardships we have suffered. These hardships have likewise affected our production of other chemicals and especially fertilizers for agriculture. On average, we have produced 8,000 tons per year. Unfortunately, due to a high level of impurities within the agent stock produced (itself due to the crippling sanctions imposed upon us by the international community), we have dedicated approximately 50 percent of this to replacement of deteriorating stockpiles. Of the remaining 50 percent, 30 percent goes towards building the KPA's stockpiles, 10 percent for training, 5 percent for research, and 5 percent is wastage. Under emergency conditions, and if non-Second Economic Committee resources were made available, we are capable of producing up to 20,000 tons of chemical agents a year. If required, and with the financial support of our foreign allies, this capacity could, in a year's time, be raised to 30,000 tons.<sup>3</sup>

The KPA's present inventory is approximately 10,000 tons of chemical munitions, the vast majority of which consists of 122 mm and 240 mm artillery rockets. There are also significant numbers of 152 mm artillery shells and air-dropped munitions for the Korean People's Air Force. In addition we maintain an inventory of ballistic missile warheads to arm 20-25 percent of the total missile inventory. The KPA currently has approximately 150 chemical warheads for ballistic missiles. This inventory meets, or exceeds, the KPA's current requirements for operations against the Southern lackeys and projected requirements for operations against the mainlands of both Japan and the United States.

The vast majority of the chemical weapons stockpiles are stored within our forward deployed corps and are under the control of the General Rear Services Bureau and Nuclear-Chemical Defense Bureau. Ballistic missile warheads are under the control of the Security Command and the State Security Department.

In addition to chemical agents, we produce a wide range of chemical defense and decontamination equipment and have organized defensive measures to safeguard the KPA and civilian populations by training in the use of protective masks, clothing, detectors, and decontamination systems. We have positioned Nuclear-Chemical Defense Bureau units throughout the KPA force structure. Approximately 1 percent of our military forces is composed of chemical warfare personnel. We also require periodic chemical warfare drills in addition to training for our population. In contrast, the U.S. imperialists show little concern for the Korean people, North or South. They have demonstrated a lack of concern by distributing approximately 14,000 gas masks to Americans in the South. This distribution clearly is an insufficient countermeasure to our skill and ability aimed toward carrying forward the revolutionary ideas of our leader. This careless response is a testament to the effectiveness of our strategy of strategic deception,

misdirection, and misinformation. We will continue to encourage this attitude amongst our enemies.

Of all our strategic weapons programs, the research, development, and production of biological agents has progressed the slowest and is the smallest in size. The reasons for this are both varied and simple. Foremost is that we do not possess the biomedical research facilities or capabilities available to the superpowers or many nations of the industrialized world. Given the limited capabilities of our medical system, the use of biological weapons, at best a precarious endeavor, has the potential to be more dangerous to us than to the Americans and their Southern lackeys unless used on their soil. Finally, there is no need for vast biological agent production facilities. The nature of biological agent production is such that the few fermentation/brewery facilities that we have earmarked for conversion to biological agent production, if needed, will easily exceed all possible KPA requirements. Our current laboratory level production facilities are sufficient for our current research and weapons inventory requirements. Our inventory includes: anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*); botulism (*Clostridium botulinum*); cholera (*Vibrio cholera* 01), hemorrhagic fever plague (*Yersinia pestis*); smallpox (*Variola*); typhoid (*Salmonella typhi*); and yellow fever. At this point, our research with genetic engineering and some other bacterial and viral strains is less well developed than ideal.

At present, our most potent and effective biological agent is the smallpox virus. We can, to some degree, control the ill effects by vaccinating our population, while the balance of the world basks in the false security that this disease has been eliminated worldwide and remains unvaccinated. The disease kills one-third to one-half those infected and debilitates others during the infectious phase. While a person is contagious, he may infect 10 to 50 people. The effectiveness of smallpox, as well as our other biological weapons, lies within our ability to employ them outside the Korean Peninsula utilizing the KPA's highly trained and

dedicated reconnaissance and sniper troops, as well as intelligence operatives, to covertly distribute them into our enemies' homeland. This method of delivery is by far the most effective since the agents will be removed from the Korean Peninsula.

Although the majority of our biological warfare program's research and development is located within our universities and medical research facilities, key testing facilities and production components are located on islands within the West Sea and in hardened underground facilities throughout the Fatherland, respectively. This has been done deliberately and in line with the directions of our Great Leader's treatise on the "Four Great Military Lines." The wisdom of this strategy is apparent in the almost complete lack of knowledge concerning our biological warfare capabilities by the United States. On occasion, imperialist propaganda has alleged that we use those accused of transgressions against the state as subjects in our biological warfare research. These are lies; all test subjects have been volunteers, willingly giving of themselves for the glory of our Dear Leader Kim Jong Il, *chuch'e* thought, and the Fatherland.

Since the 1980s, in line with our Great Leader's treatise on the "Three Revolutionary Forces," we have been exchanging biological weapons research and technology with Iran, Libya, and Syria. These activities have provided us with access to technologies denied us by imperialist United States and the international community. Our attempts to covertly obtain useful biological warfare research and technology within the former Soviet Union have so far proven unsuccessful.

Looking forward over the next 10 to 15 years, our chemical weapons program will focus upon improving the quality of chemical agents produced, conversion of stockpiles into binary agents, and increasing the quality and quantity of chemical defensive equipment available to the KPA and civilian population. We will expand our



research into third and fourth generation chemical weapons, building upon our own research, and combining it with technology gathered in Russia and China. Within the biological weapons field, our focus will be on the general upgrading of KPA and civilian biomedical research capabilities, research into the development of more effective agents and vaccines, and research into weaponization of biological agents (included within this plan is the development of an effective ballistic missile warhead). We will continue to expand both our overt and covert efforts to acquire advanced biological warfare technology from Russia and China. With regard to both programs, we will continue our efforts to recruit a small number of critical foreign nationals to assist our scientists and researchers. These plans, however, will have to be tempered by the realities of our ongoing financial situation.

It is the sincerest desire of our Dear Leader Kim Jong Il and the Korean people that the Korean Peninsula become a chemical and biological weapons-free zone. Unfortunately, this is dependent upon the actions of the imperialist United States and its Southern lackeys. Despite public statements and the signing of international agreements to the contrary, they have continued to develop and stockpile chemical and biological weapons for use against us. Until our enemies cease and desist from threatening the peaceloving Korean people, the Second Economic Committee is dedicated to providing the KPA with the most modern and effective chemical and biological weapons.

Nuclear.

No other nation in the world has lived under the threat of a nuclear war longer than has the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This threat has presented itself both directly against us from the imperialist warmongering United States, and indirectly through its threats against the peaceloving people of China and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Although the nature of these threats

has changed with the end of the so-called Cold War, it still remains and may worsen in the future as both the DPRK and China assume their just and long-denied positions within the world community. For these reasons, we have followed the wise and brilliant direction of our leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, who, in the most pure spirit of *chuch'e* thought, have directed that the research, development, and possession of our own nuclear weapons are of paramount importance to the Korean people.

During the late 1950s, and under the greatest secrecy, we began to take the preliminary steps towards our goal of producing nuclear weapons. While our friends within the Soviet Union and China helped us with basic nuclear research capabilities, they would not provide us with the knowledge we required to produce nuclear weapons. Therefore we were totally dependent upon the guidance of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung and *chuch'e* thought. Gradually, as the years passed we developed a basic nuclear research capability during the 1960s. We expanded this slowly during the early 1970s. During the late 1970s, even though we did not possess fissile material or sophisticated weapons designs, we established a nuclear weapons program and initiated the design for a nuclear weapon. During the early 1980s, we concurrently initiated a wide range of nuclear programs designed to provide us with the technical expertise and fissile material we required to build an arsenal of weapons.

Our scientists had narrowed the production of fissile material to two methods—uranium enrichment through electro-magnetic isotope separation (EMIS) and plutonium extraction through chemical reprocessing. We initially pursued both; however, this proved to be beyond our limited financial and technical capabilities, so we concentrated on the production of plutonium. The EMIS effort proceeded, but at a much reduced level and as a fallback position. By the end of the 1980s, in a demonstration of iron will and *chuch'e* strength, we had achieved a working nuclear weapons design. The production of fissile material,

however, had lagged behind due to technical limitations, financial considerations, and natural disasters. During the early 1990s, overcoming all obstacles and in a glorious testimony to the insightful wisdom of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung and Dear Leader Kim Jong Il, our scientists collected sufficient plutonium from our pilot reprocessing facility and assembled the Korean people's first nuclear weapon. It was a glorious moment in the history of the world and a testimony to the majesty of *chuch'e* strength.

Regrettably, as a result of the traitorous acts of a few weak-spirited, impure individuals, we were unable to hide all our efforts from the snooping American imperialists and their stable boys in the United Nations. During the early 1990s, tensions between our nations rose dangerously, and we headed toward war. Through the completely penetrating perspicacity of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung and Dear Leader Kim Jong Il, and the preeminence of our negotiators, we avoided a cruel and costly war for the Korean people and forced the most powerful nation in the world to sign the Agreed Framework with us on October 21, 1994.

The sheer brilliance of this negotiating effort is apparent only to those faithful to *chuch'e* thought. On the surface this agreement is humiliating to the Korean people and decimates our ability to produce nuclear weapons—the imperialist Americans' greatest fear. In exchange for the construction of two light-water reactors (LWRs), we agreed within the framework to suspend operations of the 5 megawatt (MWe) reactors and the Radiochemistry Laboratory at Yongbyon; halt construction of the 50 MWe and 200 MWe reactors at Yongbyon and T'aech'on; dismantle these and several other facilities by the time the LWR project is completed; come into full compliance with the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); and permit the safe disposal of the fuel rods from the 5 MWe reactor. The United States oversaw the creation of a new organization—the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO)—to construct the two 1,000 MWe light-water nuclear reactors by 2003. In

compensation for the loss of electrical production from the 50 MWe and 200 MWe reactors, it agreed to provide us with heavy oil (at a rate of 500,000 tons annually) until the first LWR was completed. Additionally, the United States agreed to upgrade its relations with us. The half-witted insipid Americans were euphoric and boasting to the world of their victory over us. This ignorance and presumptuousness can be ranked as one of the superlative achievements of *chuch'e* thought.

The reality of the situation is, however, quite different, attesting to the illustriousness and genius of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung's treatise on the "Four Military Lines" 40 years ago. Therein he directed that we practice deception, misdirection, and misinformation in all phases of our production of strategic weapons. Yes, we agreed to abandon—at great financial cost—our reactors at Yongbyon and T'aech'on and the Radio Chemistry Laboratory at Yongbyon. This, however, has by no means halted our production of fissile material and nuclear weapons.

When we realized during our negotiations what we would have to "surrender" to the ignorant Americans, we took appropriate steps to continue the production of fissile material and nuclear weapons. The EMIS program, which had been proceeding in complete secrecy at a slow—but successful—pace, was assigned the highest priority and resources were quickly transferred to it. The pilot chemical reprocessing plant—which had been placed in caretaker status with the opening of the Radio Chemistry Laboratory at Yongbyon—was reactivated, and we initiated a program to expand the capacities of the few small research reactors located throughout the Fatherland—which the snooping American imperialists and their washwomen know nothing about.

We also tripled security and secrecy at all our nuclear weapons related facilities; redoubled our efforts to covertly acquire nuclear materials and technologies from our friends within the former Soviet Union and China; and expanded

our nuclear weapons design team so they could accelerate their design of an enriched uranium weapon without sacrificing their ongoing work on refining plutonium weapons.

In pursuing our nuclear weapons program, we have covertly developed a research and production infrastructure that is second only to that of the superpowers. In accordance with the “Four Great Military Lines,” we have dispersed our nuclear research and production facilities throughout the Fatherland. As indicated above, concerning the American perceptions of the 1994 Agreed Framework, this dispersion program has enabled the Korean people to achieve a grand level of strategic deception, misdirection, and misinformation with regard to our nuclear weapons capabilities. In fact, their obsession with the facilities at Yongbyon, Kumch’ang-ni, and the LWR continues to blind them. We will undertake every effort to encourage and reinforce this.

During the past 10 years, we have produced and acquired enough fissile material to make some 5 to 12 nuclear weapons. The actual number of weapons has constantly fluctuated as we add to our stockpile of fissile material and as bomb designers continue to refine the efficiency of their designs. In addition to these factors, changing KPA and National Defense Commission directives have, at times, called for the development of larger yield weapons, which naturally require greater amounts of fissile material and result in an overall lower number of weapons. At present, our nuclear weapons inventory consists of the following.

Type	Number
Plutonium implosion	3
Enriched uranium	4
Experimental devices	2

This inventory does not meet the KPA's requirements for operations against the Southern lackeys, which call for 10-20 nuclear weapons in the 30–60 kiloton range. Neither does it meet the projected requirements for an additional 10-20 nuclear weapons in the 30–60 kiloton range for operations against the mainland of both Japan and the United States. If pressed, and if critical components are made available, we are capable of re-engineering this inventory into approximately 20 smaller nuclear weapons. This, however, still does not meet our overall requirements. With our growing ballistic missile capabilities we possess the ability to employ this limited arsenal of nuclear weapons throughout the Korean Peninsula and most of Japan with our crude nuclear warhead. We do not currently possess a workable nuclear warhead for our systems that can reach Alaska, Hawaii, and the United States mainland.<sup>4</sup>

We have faced numerous operational and technical obstacles in the development and production of our nuclear weapons. The most significant has been the production and acquisition of fissile material. This obstacle almost attained critical nature with the signing of the 1994 Agreed Framework. Through the ingeniousness of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung and Dear Leader Kim Jong Il, we, however, avoided the crisis and developed new covert sources for fissile material production. These sources have slowly expanded during the past 6 years. If our current nuclear relationships with Pakistan and others continue to develop favorably, we could possibly double our inventory of fissile material in the next 10 years.

Additional operational and technical obstacles have centered around seven critical areas:

- (1) general and specialized nuclear weapons design expertise;
- (2) nuclear warhead design for our long-range ballistic missiles;
- (3) acquisition of specialized materials and components;

- (4) financial support;
- (5) the need for an extremely high level of secrecy;
- (6) safety; and
- (7) the political inability to field test our core weapons designs.

To date, we have been able to address most of our basic requirements; however, the continued development of the nuclear weapons program is dependent on more comprehensive and long-term solutions. The safety record within the nuclear program has proven to be difficult to stabilize as is evident by the significant number of workers who have experienced serious radiation illnesses and the small number who have died due to quality control issues and human error. While this is regrettable, our workers continue to be highly motivated and willing to make strong sacrifices to persevere with this important work and the development of the decisive weapon. In the end, we will continue to prevail. We must, however, improve safety. Our most critical requirement—the testing of our core weapons designs—remains unfulfilled. Our developing relations with Pakistan have, however, provided us with extremely valuable technical information with which to evaluate our designs. It is conceivable—and we are working toward this goal—that in the future, with favorable political conditions, the Pakistanis will test a weapon designed to our specifications.

To address other critical areas, we have attempted to hire Chinese, Russian, and Ukrainian experts. These, however, present a serious threat to the secrecy of our nuclear weapons program. To date, the few that we have hired have shown no desire to return to their home nations. Our Chinese neighbors continue their low-level, covert assistance to our nuclear program by providing education for our people and some critical components and materials. This assistance must be closely monitored, because it, too, may compromise our secrecy. Our friends in the Middle East

and South Asia also have proven to be invaluable to our nuclear weapons program as they provide us with access to Western technologies and components denied us by trade sanctions. Beside Pakistan, our cooperation with Iran also extends to their interests in nuclear weapons. This, however, remains at a low level.

Our covert acquisition programs within Russia and Eastern Europe have proven to be moderately successful although extremely expensive due to the inexperience of the personnel we dispatched, the sophistication of the criminals in Russia, and joint United States, Russian, and European Community efforts to prevent the sale of nuclear related technologies or specialized equipment and fissile material. Despite the extreme expense, we will carry on these efforts. Probably the single greatest obstacle to the continued growth of our nuclear weapons program is the immense financial burden it has placed upon the Fatherland and the Korean people during these past 10 years of natural disasters and economic hardships. With the resolute and fatherly guidance of our Dear Leader Kim Jong Il and faith in *chuch'e* thought we have, and will continue to, overcome this onerous obstacle as well.

During the next 10 to 15 years we will focus on improving the sophistication, reliability, and yield of our nuclear inventory and increasing our stockpiles of fissile materials and nuclear weapons. Our goal is to have 30 nuclear weapons in the 30-60 kiloton range by 2015. We intend to develop more reliable nuclear warheads for our ballistic missiles, develop a nuclear warhead with advanced decoy and countermeasure systems for our long-range ballistic missiles, increase the security and survivability of our nuclear weapons production infrastructure, and continue development of active and passive nuclear defenses for the KPA and Korean people.

With regard to increasing our stockpiles of fissile materials, we are reevaluating our previous efforts, particularly within the area of gaseous diffusion. Using our



own naturally occurring resources and a gas centrifuge, it is possible to produce highly enriched uranium suitable for weapons. The U.S. imperialists waste far too much energy to produce 90 percent highly-enriched uranium for weapons when a satisfactory device can be made with a smaller percentage of enriched material. From 5,000 kilograms (kg) of natural uranium, we could produce about 250 kg of enriched material if we were to use the standard of the imperialists, but this would require 1.5 million kilowatt-hours of energy. Using the concentration technique and our own resources, in accordance with the principles of *chuch'e*, we have the capability to produce a suitable quantity of nuclear weapons.

For the future, the AVLIS method that requires laser technology shows great promise since its advantage is a much lower energy requirement. However, obtaining the equipment is the more difficult aspect. We may be able to secure what is necessary through technology exchanges. The production facilities can be secreted underground to prevent spying from the heavens.

Under the dazzling guidance of our Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il and a resolute belief in *chuch'e* thought, we have achieved what the Americans, their Southern lackeys and stooges in the United Nations, and even the world, had thought impossible—the production of sophisticated nuclear weapons. We now, for the first time in the history of the Korean people, possess the ability to inflict torturous and untold damage upon the homelands of our enemies. Absolutely the most glorious aspect of this crowning achievement is the fact that our intractable enemies have no idea of our magnificent victory.

While this current state is fraught with tremendous danger, it also presents immense opportunities. Seeing our difficulties, the United States and its lackeys believe that we are in an inferior position. They see what they want to see rather than what is really there. Guided by our Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il and armed with *chuch'e* spirit,

we have achieved a level of strategic deception, misdirection, and misinformation with regard to our nuclear weapons capabilities that is unparalleled since the days of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. We must, at all levels, encourage this ignorance and arrogance of the United States.

## Recommendations.

Recommendations to secure our future and continued sovereignty, as well as to strengthen our position in the world and ensure the continued development of our strategic weapons systems, consist of initiatives in a number of diverse, yet related areas.

- We must above all remain true to *chuch'e* thought and the guidance of our Great Leader Kim Il Sung and Dear Leader Kim Jong Il.

- We must continue "encouraging the ignorance and arrogance of our enemies" as outlined by our Great Leader Kim Il Sung in his treatise on the "Four Military Lines" 40 years ago. We must allow our enemies to know only what we want them to know by practicing deception, misdirection, and misinformation at all levels and in all phases of our dealings with them. In doing so, we maximize both our spiritual and physical strength and foster their ignorance, presumptuousness, and arrogance.

- We should vigorously continue research, development, and production of ballistic missiles. These will provide us with the capability to strike deep into the heartlands of our enemies with impunity, shattering their will to retaliate. The mere existence of our ballistic missile program serves to cause division amongst our enemies and forces them to spend billions of dollars over the next 20 years on research and development of missile defense systems that possess only the poorest of chances in partially neutralizing an attack.

- We must continue research, development, and production of chemical and biological weapons at their present levels. This will enable us either to respond in kind to a U.S. attack or to achieve a devastating surprise in a “One Blow Non-stop Attack” to reunify the Fatherland.

- Our nuclear weapons program must continue in the utmost secrecy. These decisive weapons provide the Korean people with ultimate means of ensuring the survival of the Fatherland and the dissemination of *chuch’e* thought.

- We must expand our foreign military sales of equipment and arms—especially strategic weapons, which provide the greatest profit. If we must temporarily refrain from the sale of entire systems because of some tactical diplomatic maneuvering we should aggressively pursue the sale of technologies underlying our strategic weapons systems.

- We must continue to expand and diversify our diplomatic initiatives by pursuing our own policy of “engagement.” This will reduce the focus on the United States and its influence, and demonstrate that we will not be controlled by outside imperialists—including the United Nations.

- We have proceeded with the meeting with the Southern puppet leader, Kim Dae Jung. This permits dialogue and allows us to gain understanding of those who may seek to control our actions. It will likely continue to provide significant financial rewards.

- We must continue to seek our nation’s removal from the U.S. list of “states that sponsor terrorism.” This will provide us with a superior diplomatic position within the world community which we can exploit to increase our economic stability.

- We must press for the complete removal of all the onerous and unjustifiable sanctions imposed upon us by the imperialist United States and its lackeys within the United Nations. This will enable us to engage in trade relationships

that are advantageous to us without sacrificing our commitment to the revolution.

Pursuit of these recommendations will lead us toward reunification of the Fatherland under the framework of *chuch'e* thought without sacrificing our precious integrity.

I sincerely hope these recommendations meet with the approval of the National Defense Commission and especially Comrade Kim Jong II, under whose resplendent guidance and benevolent teachings it may be accepted and implemented.

All hail Kim II Sung, all hail Kim Jong II, may the brilliance of *chuch'e* thought shine throughout the world.

Your humble servant,

Chon Pyong-ho  
National Defense Commission  
Defense Industry Policy and Inspection Department

## ENDNOTES-CHAPTER 3

1. For an explanation of "chuch'e," see chap. 2, endnote 16.
2. The Second Economic Committee is the organization with overall responsibility for weapons procurement, development, and sales within the DPRK.
3. The United States and ROK currently estimate that the DPRK is capable of producing 4,500 tons of chemical agents in peacetime and 12,000 tons in wartime.
4. The United States estimates the DPRK possesses 11–13 kg of weapons grade plutonium attained from the discharge and reprocessing campaign during 1989–90. ROK, Japanese, and Russian estimates differ—being 7–12kg, 16–24kg, and 22 kg, respectively. The differences reflect different assessments of the multiple reprocessing campaigns during 1989-91. Estimates of the DPRK nuclear weapons inventory are based upon the level of weapons design technology and quantity of

weapons-grade plutonium it possesses. The U.S. Department of Energy, in January 1994, reported that, depending upon technology used, as little as 4 kg of plutonium would be sufficient to produce a nuclear weapon. With the 11–13 kg of weapons-grade plutonium that the DPRK is estimated to have extracted prior to signing the 1994 Agreed Framework, it could have 1–3 nuclear weapons. If the fuel from the May-June 1994 refueling of the 5 MWe reactor were to be reprocessed, it would provide enough plutonium to manufacture 4–5 additional nuclear weapons. If the Japanese and Russian estimates of plutonium inventory are more accurate—being 16–24 kg, and 22 kg respectively—the DPRK could possess an additional 1–3 nuclear weapons. If the DPRK's level of technology is higher than currently estimated, it could produce nuclear weapons with quantities of plutonium as little as 1.5–3 kg. If it achieves this level of technology, its nuclear weapons could be double current estimates. The possible acquisition of fissile material from Russia, Pakistan, or elsewhere would significantly increase the DPRK's nuclear weapons inventory.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE LAST WORST PLACE ON EARTH: HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

Jack Rendler

In most of the world over the past 40 years, a government's legitimacy, even survival, has become dependent upon respect for the fundamental rights of its people. Just 20 years ago, the stability and integrity of a government were measured by how well it could control its citizens; today, the very need to exert such control is a hallmark of instability and desperation.

But since 1961, the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) have been denied contact with the rest of the world. And they have been denied even the most basic of their human rights. Since 1990, despite harsh conditions and consequences, as many as 500,000 North Koreans have escaped their homeland.<sup>1</sup> Between 1995 and 1998, North Korea lost three million of its 26 million people to famine, food shortages, and related disease.<sup>2</sup> The DPRK may have the only government in the world that is willing and capable of simultaneously repressing its citizens and starving them.

An understanding of the human rights conditions prevailing in North Korea is essential to grasping the worldview of the governing elite and to appreciating the conditions endured by the people of North Korea. And such an understanding is crucial to developing a long-term strategy for dealing with North Korea.

## Overview.

Gathering data on North Korea is notoriously difficult. Anyone with the intention of researching anything will be denied entry or will not see much. The government of the DPRK does not allow international inspection; it does not respond to inquiries from independent human rights organizations; it does not report to United Nations (UN) commissions, as it is obliged to do. There is no one place where an independent, comprehensive review of human rights in North Korea can be found. This article summarizes what can be said from the sources available.

North Korea has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, Cultural Rights, and the four Geneva Conventions. The DPRK therefore owes its own citizens and the world community a commitment to the provisions of those documents.

But the government of the DPRK regards international human rights, particularly individual rights, as alien and illegitimate. With the exception of the ruling elite, all of the people of North Korea have been deprived of their basic human rights. It is said that the paramount leader, Kim Jong Il, is the only free North Korean.<sup>3</sup> The government keeps the world from North Korea and the citizens of North Korea from each other.

Those who are assumed to be disloyal to the regime are arrested, imprisoned, tortured, starved, and executed. North Korean citizens do not have the right to propose or influence a change of government. The government forcibly resettles politically suspect families. Religious practice is confined to state-sponsored Christian and Buddhist services. Travel within the country is severely restricted, and attempting to leave it is likely to result in beatings, imprisonment, and, in some cases, execution. A government human rights commission does not respond to requests for information or investigation.<sup>4</sup>

The governments of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Russian Federation are delivering North Korean refugees to DPRK authorities against their will, in clear violation of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).

Dissidents who have successfully fled report widespread crime and a constant struggle for survival. Members of the armed forces are reportedly stealing food, livestock, and household utensils. Hundreds of thousands are moving in search of food, despite official restrictions.<sup>5</sup>

### Human Rights Inside North Korea.

The DPRK currently holds at least 200,000 people for political reasons.<sup>6</sup> It is estimated that about 400,000 prisoners have died in the camps since they were established by Kim Il Sung in 1972.<sup>7</sup>

Such prisoners may be held in any one of a variety of facilities: detention centers, "No. 69" labor rehabilitation centers, juvenile centers, maximum security prisons, relocation areas, and sanatoriums.<sup>8</sup> "Reeducation through labor" means forced labor, usually logging or mining, under brutal conditions. Entire families are detained because of supposed political deviation by one relative. Families, including children, may be imprisoned together. Under the concept of "collective retribution," children are punished for the political sins of their parents, denied education, and socially ostracized.<sup>9</sup>

In a 1988 report by the Minnesota International Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and Asia Watch, No. 69 labor rehabilitation centers were found to exist in nearly every city and county, each center containing between 100 and 200 people. The same report cited the existence of 12 to 16 labor camps with a population of 500 to 2500 in each camp.<sup>10</sup>

Amnesty International has said of these people:



Many of those named in this report are “forgotten prisoners,” whose fate remains unknown after decades of official silence. Some of those named may have died in prison. Others may still be detained, after 30 years or more. Some of the prisoners were last seen alive in 1990, others have not been heard of for decades. Amnesty International is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience, arbitrarily imprisoned in violation of international human rights standards.<sup>11</sup>

DPRK laws do not prohibit torture, and most political prisoners are tortured. Methods of torture include whipping; humiliations such as public nakedness; severe beatings; electric shock; force-feeding water, then jumping on the prisoner's abdomen to make the water come out again; and prolonged periods standing on ice outside in winter. A common method is called “the airplane,” where prisoners are hung upside down, spun, and beaten. “Punishment cells,” constructed so that a prisoner cannot stand up or lay down, are used as a consequence for breaking prison rules. Many prisoners have died from starvation and illness.<sup>12</sup>

There are more than 47 provisions in the Penal Code which call for the death penalty, including “crimes against state sovereignty” and “crimes against the state administration.” Prisoners are executed in public, sometimes for offenses as trivial as petty theft, occasionally in front of large crowds which include young children.<sup>13</sup>

The government detains and imprisons people at will. There have been “disappearances”—people taken from their homes and sent directly to prison camps.<sup>14</sup> Judicial review does not exist, and the criminal justice system operates at the behest of the government. The Public Security Ministry decides who will be punished; the Ministry of State Security decides on the penalty. The accused is entitled to representation, but the lawyer's primary role is to persuade the accused to confess.<sup>15</sup>

All forms of information are controlled by the government. Indoctrination is supported by neighborhood

associations and schools at all levels.<sup>16</sup> The opinions of all North Koreans are monitored by government security organizations, and electronic surveillance is used in many private homes.<sup>17</sup> Radios available to most North Koreans receive only government broadcasts; loudspeakers in gathering places broadcast government programs. Mass demonstrations have been staged involving as many as 500,000 people. All organizations in North Korea have been created by the government; independent public gatherings are not allowed. The General Federation of Trade Unions is used to monitor the political opinions of workers. The government monitors telephone calls and mail; telephones are not equipped to receive calls from abroad. Listening to broadcasts from abroad is forbidden.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from a few Buddhist and Christian services sponsored and monitored by the government, all religious activity is discouraged. There is no artistic freedom; all art must gild the myth of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.<sup>19</sup>

The government of the DPRK divides the entire society into three classes: core, wavering, and hostile; there are further subdivisions based on an assessment of loyalty to the regime. The regime classifies 27 percent of the population as hostile, and an additional 45 percent as wavering. As a result, approximately 15 million people are denied access to decent education, employment, housing, and medical care, and they get less to eat. Children are denied adequate education and are punished because of the loyalty classification of members of their family.<sup>20</sup>

The government has forcibly relocated hundreds of thousands from Pyongyang to the rural areas, including people with disabilities or deformities.<sup>21</sup> The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has found that the DPRK denies its children basic rights, and pursues "de facto discrimination against children with disabilities."<sup>22</sup>

The government of the DPRK does not allow freedom of movement. Leaving the country is considered treason, punishable by long prison terms or execution. Government

regulations and practical difficulties make travel within the country all but impossible. As a result, most North Koreans live, work, and shop in self-contained housing units.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps the most damaging human rights violation by the DPRK is its deliberate withholding of food and medical care from millions of people. Since 1995, floods, droughts, mismanagement, and the end of food aid from the Soviet Union resulted in severe food shortages and famine. From 1995 to 1998, several thousand children died each month. Researchers from the World Food Program, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the European Union found that 62 percent of children under 7 years have stunted growth; international assistance is feeding almost every North Korean child under that age. UNICEF has estimated that about 80,000 children are likely to die from hunger and disease, and 800,000 more are suffering from serious malnutrition.<sup>24</sup>

The DPRK has refused to allow human rights and humanitarian aid organizations to assess the full extent of the crisis. In September 1998, Medecins Sans Frontières, the largest aid group in North Korea, pulled out because of government interference in the distribution of food and the suspicion that food aid was being diverted to the military. Other independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have reported that food was being distributed on the basis of loyalty to the state, effectively leaving out those most in need.<sup>25</sup>

With a negative economic growth rate over the last 10 years, famine, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, North Korea has been forced into a position of submitting to negotiation in exchange for food. American demands to inspect suspected underground nuclear weapon construction sites were met by North Korean insistence on \$300 million in cash and food aid for the privilege. U.S. recovery of the bodies of Korean War MIAs was halted when North Korea demanded new humanitarian

assistance, including construction of factories. In mid-June 2000, North Korea announced plans to ask donor countries for \$250 million to relieve hunger and to attain self-sufficiency in food production.<sup>26</sup>

Refugees.

Article 47 of the Criminal Code of North Korea states:

A citizen of the Republic who defects to a foreign country or to the enemy in betrayal of the country and the people . . . shall be committed to a reform institution for not less than 7 years. In cases where the person commits an extremely grave offense, he or she shall be given the death penalty.

The vast majority of North Korean refugees are located in the Northeast provinces of the PRC; several thousand are in the Russian Federation. Estimates of the total refugee population in the PRC vary wildly, from the 10,000 reported by the Chinese government to the 300,000 estimated by local NGOs. The most rigorous field surveys suggest a number of 140,000 to 150,000 North Korean refugees in China.<sup>27</sup>

The border between North Korea and China stretches 850 miles and offers many opportunities for a safe crossing. Most crossings happen on winter nights over frozen rivers. Most refugees cross the Tumen River; some cross the Yalu River or through the forests around the Changbai mountains. People usually travel in small groups of two to five; some cross by paying commercial carriers or by bribing North Korean border guards.<sup>28</sup>

Most refugees seek protection and housing from the Korean-Chinese communities in the Yanbian Korean-Chinese autonomous district. Others (slightly less than half of the total refugee population) live in the three Northeast states of Liaoning-sheng, Jilin-sheng, and Heilongjiang-sheng.<sup>29</sup>

Some may find shelter and assistance with relatives or acquaintances, and ethnic Koreans unknown to them often provide food, medicine, and small sums of money in return for performing household chores. Many of these people go on to perform work arranged by these hosts.<sup>30</sup>

The vast majority of refugees in China (perhaps 95 percent) left North Korea in search of food and are unwilling to return until the food supply and distribution improves.<sup>31</sup> While North Koreans may be driven to China by hunger, the government of the DPRK regards them as traitors for leaving; their return means political persecution.

Most refugees are single adults between the ages of 18 and 30, with no dependents. They are likely to be from shattered families that have lost at least one member to food shortage or famine. Most are from urban areas, although refugees from rural areas and areas far from the border are increasing. Few refugees have been in China for more than 2 years; some return to North Korea with food; others have been forcibly repatriated.<sup>32</sup>

The men are usually laborers with a high school education; they perform the kind of work no one else will do—cutting rock, mining, moving human waste. Women work in restaurants, do housekeeping, attend to patients; they also work in “entertainment,” from which they are often forced into prostitution. Many are able to stay in China by virtue of marriage to a Chinese national. Some women are married by introduction, others are sold by human traffickers; some escape, but most stay on in order to be fed.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps as many as 50,000 North Korean refugee women have been sold by Chinese criminals to Chinese purchasers, many for the purpose of sexual slavery. These women frequently become the victims of confinement and sexual abuse. Unwanted pregnancies often result in poorly performed abortions; proper follow-up care is rarely possible.<sup>34</sup>

Most refugee children are male, over 10 years old, who have lost at least one parent. Most roam around and beg for food or money, sleeping in streets and public squares. Very young children cross the border in groups and stay together as they move from village to village. Such groups are easily detected and returned; about half the North Korean children in China have arrived and been returned two or three times. All of these children exhibit profound physical and psychological damage.<sup>35</sup>

Chinese police have markedly increased expulsions of North Koreans; the number has more than doubled this year to about 2,000 per month. In January, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) granted refugee status to seven North Koreans, but China sent them back anyway. The PRC does not permit the UN or other international groups to investigate conditions on the border, although China is party to treaties that should permit such investigation.

North Korean refugees arrested in China are sent first to a Chinese detention camp or prison where they remain for a week to a month. In April 2000 about 100 North Koreans in a detention center in Tumen rioted and held guards hostage to protest China's program of forced repatriation.<sup>36</sup>

Refugees are returned to North Korea where they are interrogated at an intelligence agency office at the border. They are then sent to a detention camp near the border, and from there to another detention center in or near their hometown. An intelligence agency office in the region of their hometown determines punishment.<sup>37</sup>

They are then sent to one of four places: home, labor camps, prisons, or camps for political offenders. Women, children, and the elderly are usually "re-educated" in their home areas through 3 to 7 days of violent language and beatings. Young people over 16 are most often sent to labor education camps. Those accused of smuggling or trafficking receive prison terms ranging from 1 to 15 years. Those accused of meeting South Koreans are sent to camps for

political offenders. All detention and imprisonment are accompanied by wretched conditions, beatings, ill-treatment, and torture.<sup>38</sup>

There are approximately 6,000 North Korean refugees in camps in the Russia. They come largely from logging sites run by the DPRK in the Khabarovsk and Amur regions of the Russian Far East. Most were sent to work legally, but left the sites with the intention of not returning to North Korea. Some made their way illegally into Russia directly or from China. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, loosened controls resulted in higher numbers of North Korean workers leaving their sites for other parts of Russia.<sup>39</sup>

At the larger sites there appear to be two prisons, one for criminals and one for political offenders. Political infractions include criticizing North Korea and challenging camp authorities. Food is inadequate; discipline is severe and includes ill-treatment such as shackles and leg weights.<sup>40</sup>

Russia is pursuing a policy of tolerating North Korean refugees without granting them refugee status or living permits. Refugees must still fear being arrested as illegal aliens by Russian law enforcement, as well as apprehension by the North Korean Public Security Service. North Korean agents also pursue people who have helped the refugees. North Korean security forces, sometimes on the territory of the Russian Federation, have executed apprehended refugees. The prospect of being returned to North Korea has led some refugees to desperate acts: perpetrating crimes in order to be sentenced to Russian prisons and committing suicide.<sup>41</sup>

South Korea has a policy of accepting and assisting refugees from the North. Despite this, there are fewer than 1,000 refugees in the South, fewer than 120 in Seoul.<sup>42</sup> There are several reasons for this: the stigma attached to South Korea in the minds of North Koreans; the likely danger to family members remaining in the North; the increased time and procedures for acceptance; and the

long-term record of difficulty for refugees in adjusting to life in the South. The vast majority of refugees (perhaps 90 percent) would rather stay in China than live in South Korea.<sup>43</sup>

## Strategy and Action Recommendations.

In the past year, North Korea has taken a number of steps toward ending its isolation. Diplomatic relations were resumed with Italy in January, and with Australia after a lapse of 25 years. Similar overtures have been made to Britain and Canada. On May 29-31, Kim Jong Il made a secret visit to Beijing (his first since 1983) to meet with Chinese President Jiang Zemin. Jiang is likely to visit North Korea before the end of the year 2000. U.S. and North Korean officials have been engaged for 6 years in a series of talks on tracing U.S. soldiers missing in action during the Korean War, and on North Korea's civilian atomic power plants and intentions regarding nuclear arms manufacture. Similar meetings are taking place with Japan. The DPRK has agreed to allow Hyundai of South Korea to develop a tourist facility in the Diamond Mountains, for \$906 million over 6 years. North Korea showed a likelihood of participating in ASEAN meetings on defense and strategic issues in Bangkok in July 2000, and the DPRK has expressed interest in joining the Asian Development Bank.<sup>44</sup> Reuters reported that Kim Yong-nam, president of the presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, would represent North Korea at the UN Millennium Summit in September.<sup>45</sup>

- The open countries of the world, especially Japan, the United States, and South Korea, should seize this opening to extend their ties with the DPRK. Such contact, over the long term, offers the best chance of bringing change to the government and to the people of North Korea. At the same time, there must be a greater sense of urgency for improving the human rights of the people of North Korea.



- The United States should pursue a strategy of securing constant improvement in the human rights performance of the DPRK. Development and implementation of such a strategy should be accomplished in conjunction with other open countries important to the leadership of the North Korea: Japan, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

- The basic message of negotiations should be: We can do business with you, but it will be a good deal easier if you would undertake the reforms necessary to assure respect for human rights. In negotiating with the DPRK on human rights issues, the United States should maintain the forward position: economic favor should follow political reform; the rights of the North Korean people should not be held hostage to an endless series of economic demands.

- Relevant North Korean officials, especially the Ambassador to the UN, should have the opportunity for frequent contact with the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

- Offers of international humanitarian aid should be made, but should be contingent upon independent monitoring of its distribution. Such aid should be given in-kind rather than in currency.

- The UN should take primary responsibility for long-term monitoring of the human rights situation in North Korea, and in areas of China and Russia adjacent to the North Korean border. Priority should be given to arranging a meaningful fact-finding mission by an independent, international human rights organization.

- The Secretary General of the UN should make it clear that, since the DPRK has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adherence to its principles is not a casual consideration.

- The World Trade Organization and other international trade and labor groups should make it clear that forced labor of any kind is unacceptable. The World

Bank and the International Monetary Fund should make future loans contingent upon measurable improvement in the protection of human rights.

- At a minimum, the government of North Korea should:

- ... make a meaningful commitment to implementing the rights and procedures guaranteed in the North Korean Penal Code;

- ... amend Article 47 of the Criminal Code to bring it into conformity with international standards;

- ... ensure that no form of torture occurs anywhere;

- ... provide the information about individuals, groups, and prisons requested by human rights groups;

- ... discontinue the harassment, imprisonment, and ostracism of North Korean refugees abroad, and returned refugees at home.

- The PRC is the key on the status of refugees. The UNHCR should press the DPRK to fulfill its obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, accord displaced North Koreans in China refugee status, and press the PRC to protect and provide for North Korean refugees in China. The government of the RPC should alter its policy of forced repatriation of North Korean refugees, and adopt guidelines consistent with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The Chinese government should provide special protection and support to North Korean refugee women and children, and act to prevent the sexual slave trade on the border.

- Russian authorities should bring an immediate end to North Korean Public Security Service (PSS) operations in Russian territory. No North Korean workers who are at risk in the DPRK should be forcibly returned by Russia. Russian authorities should take responsibility for preventing ill-treatment of North Koreans at all work sites.

## Conclusion.

For peace and freedom in East Asia; for continued rapprochement among the United States, the PRC, and Russia; and for further reduction of nuclear weaponry, a stable and secure North Korea is essential. A regime is stable and secure only when its assumption of legitimacy is matched by its protection and promotion of fundamental human rights. Kim Jong Il's regime must be regarded as fundamentally unstable. The economy is so ruined that North Koreans flee to China to seek a better life. The people suffer famine and a chronic shortage of food. Military spending and priority cannot be sustained. The entire citizenry is repressed, and political prisoners are held in vast numbers.

*The Economist* recently remarked:

To contemplate North Korea is to stare into the abyss. There are those who argue that if North Korea fails to reform, its regime will collapse. Others retort that, on the contrary, collapse will follow directly from reform. Probably both are right.<sup>46</sup>

One of the greatest ideas of the philosopher, Confucius, regards the nature of power. He said that there was only one legitimate purpose of power, whether you use it as a leader, a parent, or simply a human being—to work for the well-being of the powerless. Confucius believed that any other use of power constituted an abuse that would result in the loss of power.<sup>47</sup> Work to secure human rights for the people of North Korea is good policy: politically, strategically, and morally.

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## CHAPTER 5

### CHINA'S GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE KOREAN PENINSULA

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*Author's Note: Before the notable spring 2000 summits in Beijing and Pyongyang,<sup>1</sup> China's policies and practices for the Korean Peninsula had slipped into the background. American attention and media reporting China's regional goals and strategies had been justifiably dominated by the tensions across the Taiwan Strait and their implications for the United States. The "Taiwan problem" is, as Chinese and American leaders have repeatedly stated, the likely cause for hostile military actions between China and the United States. The divided Korean Peninsula, jutting southward from China's northeast coast and blocking (with the Russian Far East) China's access to the Sea of Japan, has fortunately lost the status of a prime problem likely to kindle hostilities. Encouraging initial views of the summit meeting between the North and South Korean leaders has, for many Koreans and others, replaced fears of war with euphoria—whether warranted or not. This development, at least with respect to the Korean Peninsula, should not, however, diminish interest in China's intentions and actions concerning its two important Korean neighbors and the implications of China's policies and strategies for the United States. Indeed, it now seems all the more likely that changes on the Korean Peninsula will be the catalyst for revision of the architecture of Northeast Asian security.*

*This chapter will examine the People's Republic of China's (PRC) aspirations and actions with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Primary sources for this section are Chinese officials, military officers, specialists from*

*strategic studies institutes, scholars, and practitioners who have diverse knowledge and experience in China's security concerns in Korea. These sources are not secretive or guarded; they readily discuss China and Korea. Chinese positions, goals, and strategies will be analyzed; the implications for Beijing, Washington, Seoul, and others will be explored. Chinese motives, as they apply to a changed Korea and to the United States, will be examined. Prospects for reconciling divergent American and Chinese regional security philosophies, focused through the lenses of the existing regional security situation and likely change on the Korean Peninsula, will be explored. Taiwan and its reunification or other outcome deserve the attention they are currently receiving, but Taiwan will probably be only a sideshow in the bigger arena of Northeast Asian security in the coming years. Korea is likely to be the center ring for the main performance that will help shape security relations among the major regional players.*

## HOW CHINA VIEWS ITS RELATIONS WITH THE KOREAS

China justifiably prides itself on its nicely balanced relations with both North Korea and South Korea, arguably (and convincingly so) a better balance by far of comprehensive relations with the two Koreas than that of any other nation.<sup>2</sup> For much of the last decade, Beijing was perhaps the only capital to have normal working relations with both Koreas,<sup>3</sup> a situation that only now appears to be changing as other important nations move to improve their relations. Russia, for example, has very recently begun to mend its frayed ties with the North; Australia and Italy have established formal diplomatic relations; and Canada has recognized Pyongyang. Talks to that end with Japan continue. Yet China recently demonstrated its preeminent position with North Korea when the latter's President Kim Jong Il chose Beijing as his first foreign destination, conducting the stunning, secretive visit just 2 weeks before he was to hold the historic June 2000 initial meeting with



his South Korean counterpart.<sup>4</sup> China's uniquely balanced links with the two Koreas are especially noteworthy in light of the vast differences between the North and South and between the two relationships.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, China's positions and policies for the Korean Peninsula are not well understood or may be widely misperceived, offering the prospect of discovering a number of surprises, large and small.

## China and the DPRK.

"We wish that the North Korean people . . . will continue to achieve victories in the process of building socialism with Korean characteristics and in seeking peaceful reunification," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said at a press briefing in September 1998. In referring to the then recent confirmation of Kim Jong Il as the North Korean leader, he was quite reserved, even taciturn, saying only: "Chinese and North Korean leaders in the past had a tradition of exchanging visits and we hope this tradition will continue."<sup>6</sup>

This somewhat cool official statement was made less than 2 years ago after North Korea's parliament, unexpectedly meeting for the first time in 4 years, named Kim Jong Il as head of state. At that time, Kim was also reelected (first elected in 1993) chairman of the powerful National Defense Commission, with parliament terming that position the "highest post of the state." These events were transpiring in the wake of North Korea's surprising launch several days before of the solid-fuel, three-stage rocket that flew over Japan on August 31, 1998. They illustrate the difficulties and uncertainties that plague the PRC government as it determines how best to treat the DPRK. Now, as we have seen, Kim Jong Il has visited China for the first time in 17 years, his first visit there as North Korea's leader, and his first visit in that capacity to any foreign country.<sup>7</sup> There was in Beijing a hospitable reception, but there were still indications of Chinese uncertainty about Kim and his policies and about North Korea and where it is headed. Those issues are an

appropriate place to start an examination of China's view of the Korean Peninsula—and the PRC's outlook and attitudes, as suggested, are not lacking in surprises.

*The Concept of North Korea as a Buffer State.* Among the unexpected discoveries is the diversity of Chinese views on the matter of North Korea as a buffer state. The idea that North Korea is a valued socialist and authoritarian buffer between China to the north, and the military forces of the United States and the ROK and the capitalist and pluralistic influences of South Korean society to the south, is much more readily and widely accepted in Western academic and military circles than among Chinese academics and strategists. Some Chinese thinkers call the concept of a strategic buffer anachronistic, yet another bit of debris left over from the Cold War. Others deny that attention is given to the buffer concept in Chinese thinking about the Korean Peninsula. Still others describe the buffer idea as a concept that has little validity at present, even if it was a more vital factor in earlier years.

There are stronger views: The buffer concept is abhorrent to some Chinese because it implies both that South Korea is at least a potentially hostile power, something Beijing does not wish to dwell upon (or even contemplate), and that Beijing might somehow be obligated to Pyongyang for mendicant North Korea's service as a strategic buffer against hostile intrusions of various sorts. Further, the buffer idea runs counter to the precept of nonalignment, a notion Beijing wishes to foster concerning its relations with the two Koreas. One active and well-informed Chinese official said that in several years of talks between China and South Korea, in which he had participated, the buffer concept was never discussed, including in private and preparatory discussions among the Chinese delegations.<sup>8</sup>

Another view is that emphasis on the buffer concept has, for good reason, waned during the last decade. The establishment first of strong trade relations and then

diplomatic relations between China and the Republic of Korea was a strong factor in diminished emphasis on the concept; this was reinforced recently by other favorable actions by Seoul—as perceived by Beijing. Notable among these were President Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy toward Pyongyang and the South Korean Ministry of Defense decision not to participate with the United States in the development and ultimate deployment of theater missile defense (TMD) systems, both occurring in early 1999. Now there is the apparent easing of North-South animosity during the summit meeting of the Kims. Chinese thinkers, who give weight to these particular developments, see the ROK in a new light: as simply a bilateral alliance partner with the United States and not so much as part of a *de facto* collective security network comprising Japan, the United States, and the ROK—a concept deeply troubling to Beijing. For some, this brings a measure of contentment that makes it seem ludicrous that a buffer state would be of value in this changed political geography.

Capping all this is a sense of assuredness among the Chinese that nothing is about to happen to take away the buffer—whether they acknowledge its value (or feel it necessary) or not. Any form of reconciliation or reunification on the Korean Peninsula is viewed by most Chinese specialists as many years away, maybe a decade or more, so imminent demise of the buffer (acknowledged or not) is not a fear. In this vein, there is a conviction on the part of most moderate Chinese thinkers that the United States would be highly unlikely to move its military forces north of the 38th parallel even after the demilitarized zone (DMZ) is dissolved, and that, as we shall see, it is not necessarily a great Chinese concern if U.S. forces were to remain on the peninsula.

Laying out these various Chinese views is not meant to imply a sweeping consensus that the concept of North Korea as a valuable friendly buffer state is a dead idea. It does imply that the concept is at least no longer central to general Chinese thinking about the future of the Korean Peninsula.

At a minimum, Beijing has, as revealed in the various views described, conditioned itself at least to the eventual demise of this buffer between its highly industrialized Northeast and objectionable influences or forces emanating from the southern half of the peninsula. And even now the view among important Chinese thinkers has moved very far from general acceptance of the need for such a buffer or its central applicability to Chinese strategic thought concerning the two Koreas, as was clearly the case in earlier years. The concept of a Korean buffer does, however, survive in another form: The Korean Peninsula, taken as a whole, is viewed by Beijing as a buffer between China and an increasingly dangerous and active Japan.<sup>9</sup> It is significant that the current buffer of import to Beijing is not one between it and the combination of South Korea and the U.S.-ROK alliance but rather between China and the combination of Japan and the U.S.-Japan alliance.

*DPRK Receptivity to Economic Reform: A Parable of the State of the Relationship.* Pyongyang has a reputation for refusing to accept advice on how it might reform its dismal economy, even disregarding advice given in a gentle, Asian way by Beijing. The Chinese have tried to demonstrate by example, rather than finger-waving and lecturing, that North Korea has much to learn from China. Put another way, Beijing has created opportunities for Pyongyang to become familiar with Chinese economic reforms and other domestic changes.<sup>10</sup> It has often seemed that this effort was largely futile.

This popular conception, that Pyongyang just stubbornly ignores good Chinese advice and examples, is not, however, the whole story. China, indeed, continues delicately promoting economic reform for North Korea, and North Korea truly is often quite unreceptive, if not wholly intransigent. Among the reasons is that North Koreans believe that China has become largely capitalist and pro-American. The Chinese model, as a consequence, does not seem to Pyongyang generally applicable to staunchly communist North Korea.

Two years ago, nonetheless, noteworthy, if not sweeping, change began. There is now decreasing resistance in Pyongyang to China's gentle hints about the advantages to be gained by reform in North Korea. Pyongyang has recognized that all successful countries have opened to the outside. More specifically, in 1999, North Korea obliquely acknowledged the success of China's economic reform—an important step away from stubborn resistance. Pyongyang now permits farmers to have the combination of small plots of land and small farmers' markets where the products of these plots may be sold. This is tacit acceptance of the advice China has sensitively proffered, advice offered in the form of recounting Chinese experiences, not in the form of demands or threats to cease support. During President Kim Jong Il's recent visit to Beijing, he reportedly stated that China has scored great achievements in its reform and opening to the outside world and that its comprehensive national power is being improved and its international status is rising as well. All that, Kim said, demonstrated that the policy of reform and opening to the outside world, which was initiated by Deng Xiaoping, is correct, and that the Korean party and government support the policy.<sup>11</sup> These were striking words that received little outside attention; however, these strong statements, implying at least that Chinese reforms might be employed in North Korea, were not repeated in the North Korean press reports of Kim Jong Il's visit to Beijing.

To be specific, it should be noted that China had not previously been altogether ignored by North Korea as a source of advice and example in confronting economic issues. Pyongyang had, for example, accepted in earlier decades essentially the verbatim version of China's statute governing the operation of special economic zones and the use of foreign direct investment. More broadly, Pyongyang has learned to some degree how to do economic reform, some of it learned from China, and yet maintain internal political stability. North Korea, nonetheless, has, at least until now, considered it essential in its careful, gradual reform process

not to follow the path of ideological doom down which China has strode—as Pyongyang sees it.

That is the greater lesson reflected herein. The former closeness between the PRC and the DPRK, “as close to lips as teeth,” has been replaced by a pragmatic, even critical and quite selective, approach toward each other. Beijing seems purposefully to have sought the visit by Kim Jong II both to make it clear to all that its influence in Korea was second to none and to influence the outcome of the imminent North-South summit. Although some closure seems to be occurring now, there remains the earlier tangible evidence of a gap between Beijing and Pyongyang: Beijing chose in 1996 in the United Nations Security Council to back condemnation of the North Korean submarine intrusion incident in South Korea. Pyongyang initially objected to Chinese participation in the Four Party Talks. Rumors were rampant that Chinese officials simply did not like Kim Jong II personally, despite their close relations with his father.

As the president of a prestigious Chinese think tank said in March 2000, China no longer treats North Korea as a disadvantaged comrade but rather as a brother. This means that the “costs of the evening” are shared, that China picks up the tab less and expects a relationship with Pyongyang more on the basis of relations between normal states. However, China provides help when needed in an understanding way.<sup>12</sup> (In another vein, a Chinese specialist on North Korea noted that Beijing has little choice now but to accept and work with Kim Jong II; it is apparent that he has consolidated power and is running North Korea.) This dancing together—but not too closely—has derived not just from the obvious national differences in size, population, wealth, and geopolitical circumstances, but also from the most salient difference, namely, that China’s leaders have elected to make fundamental changes in the precepts underlying communism for China and the Chinese Communist Party. Those changes remained anathema to North Korea’s leaders. It is not yet clear whether the

May-June 2000 Kim visit to Beijing has removed this barrier.

*Pyongyang: Both an Irritant Rubbing Against China's Northeastern Underbelly and a Thorn under Tokyo's and Washington's Saddles.* There is no doubt that one of the most prominent characteristics of North Korean leadership and its approach to international relations is what might be termed "the three o's"—obstinacy, obduratness, and obstreperousness. It is occasionally overlooked in the West that Beijing must also put up with its share of these obnoxious North Korean qualities, to add yet another o-word.

Although Beijing did not share during the early years of the last decade the deep pessimism about the DPRK's future prevalent in many Western capitals, North Korea was increasingly acknowledged by Beijing as a potential economic, political, and social disaster. And this profoundly troubled country borders on an important, already economically troubled, region of China. What is sorely needed by China there, across the Yalu and Tumen Rivers, is a stable and prosperous neighbor. Furthermore, Pyongyang, as has been described, has not been receptive to Chinese advice on reform or, for that matter, to Chinese advice, example, or urgings in most other areas. As has been revealed by many Chinese who have dealt with North Koreans, Beijing finds it very difficult to communicate with Pyongyang, and when it does try to communicate, the outcome is often misunderstanding or either intentional or inadvertent misinterpretation. So Pyongyang and all of North Korea are more than an irritant to China; North Korea is one of China's most difficult and unpleasant problems to manage. Putting it in the nicest way he could, a Chinese official said, "The Chinese goal is to keep North Korea reasonable and to keep it from being a troublemaker."<sup>13</sup>

One of the most troublesome specific problems is the matter of North Koreans fleeing the poverty and famine, or

near-famine, pervasive in many areas near China. Estimates of the numbers of those who have fled across the border into China and settled there, those who make brief forays for food or to earn a bit of money, and those who are turned back, vary greatly with the source. The numbers are likely much higher than the estimates of tens of thousands offered by Chinese authorities. In any case, China is managing these aspects of the immigrant and refugee problems and may even have increased the forcible repatriation of refugees in preparation for Kim's arrival in Beijing.<sup>14</sup>

Most Chinese who study or deal with these problems have not believed and do not now believe that North Korea is on the brink of collapse or even that there is an impending lesser calamity that will send hordes fleeing northward. They, instead, tend to see North Koreans as even more resilient than were the Chinese during their very trying periods of the Great Leap Forward in the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s. In other words, Chinese observers believe the North Koreans are accustomed to making do with very little and tolerating a very abusive and ineffectual central government—that the North Koreans are and will continue to be survivors. So far, over half a decade of very great North Korean misery, they have been right.

Nevertheless, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its adjunct, the People's Armed Police (PAP), are said by responsible sources to have made contingency plans to block a refugee flood into China and to manage the problem to the extent feasible. The need to plan for this contingency is troublesome to Beijing for two reasons that might not be obvious. First, it is a factor in considering how to dispose its armed forces and, specifically, a constraint on the freedom to redeploy forces, something that could become a pressing concern if China wants to move forces southward to bring heightened pressure to bear on Taiwan or to cope with internal or external threats posed in China's far northwest or southwest. Even under present circumstances, China's



top military authority, the Central Military Commission (CMC), may well be keeping group armies and other units in Northeast China, in proximity to the border with North Korea, that it would prefer to have moved to the east coast facing Taiwan. Second, if there arises a crisis of significant proportions in North Korea, a CMC decision to move blocking forces into position to stop refugee flows may, to avoid the appearance of a precursor to an invasion, have to be distinguished for an international audience from a move into North Korea, as discussed more fully later in this paper.

Beyond these problems, there is, of course, the fundamental issue of whether and how China could and should cope with the practical and humanitarian problems likely in a North Korean calamity—problems that may dwarf the experiences the world witnessed in the exodus from Kosovo, for example. The PLA and PAP are used regularly in China to aid in dealing with natural disasters, especially the devastating floods and earthquakes that plague China. However, neither of these forces is trained in managing thousands or hundreds of thousands of non-Chinese with whom they, for the most part, do not have a common language and whose needs will be very difficult to meet.

If China is busy enhancing PLA capability along these lines, it has been silent, even secretive, about the endeavor. The odds are very high that the methods employed by the PLA and PAP to handle very large numbers of refugees, should such a situation develop, will be rudimentary and even cruel if measured against the norms of worldwide agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to such efforts. Beijing is highly unlikely either to admit to the world the scope of the problem and its inability to cope or to permit prompt intervention by others experienced in handling refugee migrations. It is also not likely that many Chinese officials are deeply concerned about that potential problem, not because they are heartless but rather because China is constrained by limited resources, is short-sightedly sympathetic with Pyongyang's

current demands simply to return those who flee (so as to deter further flight), and is focused on Taiwan and perceived internal dissidence. Beijing is content to relegate the collapse of North Korea to the category of problems with a low probability of occurrence. Few, if any, in China see that a grotesque mishandling and mismanagement of refugee hordes from North Korea could be, for China's international repute, the Tiananmen debacle redux.

*Pyongyang: Useful Device to Keep Washington and Tokyo Off Balance?* There is, however, another aspect of North Korea's penchant for being obnoxious. Some Western observers wonder if Beijing, although having, itself, to contend with North Korea's bad conduct and unreliability, does not to some extent relish the fact that Pyongyang keeps Washington and Tokyo reeling as well—and that American and Japanese leaders are far more preoccupied over this "rogue state" than Chinese leaders. This, however, is another of those views more widely held in the West than among Chinese specialists. As one astute Chinese official associated with a body under China's State Council put it: "One hears talk of using Pyongyang's obstreperous behavior to keep Washington off balance, but in fact the concept has no utility and has not been used in practice. Putting a different slant on the issue, he said that there is some validity instead to the concept that Washington needs Beijing to deal better with Pyongyang and other (unspecified) troublemakers."<sup>15</sup>

Other Chinese who have to deal with North Korea are too concerned with the essential effort to keep Pyongyang from acting up to think that encouraging mischief or worse by Pyongyang could be useful in this overly clever way to best Washington. They also are concerned that such tactics might backfire with resultant undue hazard to China's direct interests or regional stability. One Chinese official said first that it does not seem necessary for China to use North Korea as a burr; North Korea surely does not need encouragement in this regard from any country. In his view, North Korea already creates too many troubles. Moreover,

he concluded, there are, as things stand, enough problems between the United States and China; why produce more through uncontrolled methods involving a somewhat erratic North Korea?<sup>16</sup>

With respect to Sino-American relations, Pyongyang's current utility to Beijing lies, for the most part then, in playing on the American conviction that Washington can be aided in dealing with Pyongyang if China is pulling in the same direction or at least not tugging the other way. But the United States and Japan are opening up to North Korea, and Pyongyang is at least sporadically receptive, even reaching out in recent months. As Tokyo and Washington's connections to Pyongyang become more frequent and numerous and grow stronger, Beijing will be left largely with just the negative side of bad North Korean behavior—worrying about how to keep Pyongyang under control. This aspect to PRC-DPRK relations was certainly a central component of Beijing's calculus in having Kim visit prior to the North-South summit.

To put a finer point on all this, Beijing sees specific aspects of Pyongyang's behavior as counterproductive rather than as useful in keeping Tokyo and Washington off balance. For example, in the eyes of most Chinese specialists, North Korea is seen as an excuse (and a weak excuse by Chinese reasoning) for the United States and Japan to cooperate on the development of TMD systems that are primarily intended to contain China. Similarly, North Korea is among the countries that give great impetus to the American effort to persuade or coerce Moscow to modify the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Thus Washington can, because of North Korea's ballistic missile program, make a rational case for national missile defense (NMD) efforts that Beijing sees as curbing China's crucial nuclear deterrent.

Pyongyang is often trying to Beijing even when trying to be helpful. Russian President Vladimir Putin's surprising announcement, after his unprecedented visit to Pyongyang

in July 2000, that North Korea would abandon its ballistic missile program if it received assistance from other countries in "peaceful space research"<sup>17</sup> might have seemed helpful to China's crusade against NMD. However, a Chinese official spokesman was forced to say shortly thereafter that China knew nothing of the remarkable, yet enigmatic, proposal Putin had apparently extracted from the Kim on this, the first visit to Pyongyang ever by a Soviet or Russian leader! Chinese leaders, apparently nonplussed by both the announcement and its circumstances, have been silent on its likely validity or utility in China's campaign (in concert with Moscow) against U.S. NMD. President Putin called President Jiang Zemin only after he had completed his trips to Pyongyang and then to the G-8 meeting in Okinawa to belatedly tell him of the assurance he had received from Kim Jong Il that North Korea would cease its missile program if it received outside help in space exploration.<sup>18</sup> To make matters more trying, the Russians announced on the day of the Putin-to-Jiang call that Kim Jong Il would soon make another trip abroad, an extended visit to Russia by train, thus seeming to upstage the brief trip by Kim to Beijing a few weeks earlier.<sup>19</sup>

*PRC-DPRK Military Relations and Arms Sales.* North Korea's armed forces, the Korean People's Army (KPA), at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century lost its longstanding primary source of support, the Soviet Union. China was a significant source of military equipment, especially ballistic missiles and related technology in earlier decades, when it was trying to woo Pyongyang away from Moscow.<sup>20</sup> There was also a later interlude of intimacy between Pyongyang and Beijing right after the events at Tiananmen in 1989. North Korea, almost alone in the world, was supportive of Chinese actions to suppress the notorious, televised uprising in the heart of China. Then in the 1990s, North Korea's isolation became greater than ever, when rationally it would seem North Korea was more needy of Chinese aid and support. Instead, other factors came to the fore. The development by Beijing of close ties to Seoul,

starting with economic ties and culminating in diplomatic relations in August of 1992, and China's tendency to substitute its practical interests for ideological considerations were among the factors that came into play. Related to these, Beijing wanted to have its cake and eat it too: to maintain appropriate relations with the KPA while cautiously establishing ties with the ROK armed forces. Put another way, the PLA has felt that it must maintain relations with the KPA to balance or offset the Chinese military's improving relations with the South Korean military—specifically to preclude paranoid Pyongyang's overreacting to these improving PRC-ROK links. This has not been an easy thing to carry off.

Nevertheless, this development was less disturbing to Pyongyang (or at least they made less of it) than might have been the case. This is, in significant measure, because of the unavoidable need for North Korean leaders to focus on their country's severe economic plight, the desperate requirements for other-than-military aid, and, indeed, on the very survival of North Korea as a nation and society. Beijing was pleased to operate in this way; it enhanced China's ability to claim the moral high ground, to point out that it provided very little in the form of military aid to Pyongyang while Washington supplied Seoul with large amounts of weapons and military equipment and stationed tens of thousands of troops on South Korean soil. So both capitals, Pyongyang and Beijing, were sufficiently satisfied (or at least distracted or content) not to press unduly for a more robust PLA-KPA military relationship.

This is not to suggest that there were no arms and technology transfers, and that North Korea has not made significant requests from time to time during the last decade. According to a senior PLA Navy officer, deceased (1995) Marshal O Chin-u, then North Korea's leading military figure,<sup>21</sup> at one time requested more of what were then China's top warships (termed Luda-class destroyers in the West) and submarines than the PLA Navy had in its three fleets combined. Other exaggerated requests led

Chinese military officials to conclude (and sometimes weakly joke) that North Korea was asking for a great deal in the hope of getting even a little—possibly an indication of the distance between the two militaries rather than evidence of close cooperation.

A noted South Korean expert on China's military relations with the Koreas suggested a general conviction among informed observers that China

refrained from providing weapons to North Korea in the 1990s—even if the possibility that a small amount of weapons parts and military technology made its way to North Korea cannot be ruled out.<sup>22</sup>

Reflecting at least ambivalence among the DPRK's leaders toward China's potential to supply military aid, this South Korean specialist quotes the very high-ranking 1997 defector from Pyongyang, Hwang Jang Yop:

Since Kim Jong Il [the current DPRK leader] does not rate China's military capability highly, North Korea has not introduced weapons or the technologies for developing weapons from China.<sup>23</sup>

It is impossible at present to say if such statements were made (or convictions held, if that was the case) because they were altogether true or, instead, as a consequence of Pyongyang's pique at Beijing for the snub of recognizing Seoul, even if relations with Pyongyang were not interrupted.

It can be said that visits at the very highest levels ceased.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, other senior government officials from the DPRK and PRC, including the foreign ministers of each country, exchanged visits *after* formal recognition of the DPRK's declared foe, the ROK, in August of 1992 and before the death of Kim Il Sung, North Korea's long-ruling "Great Leader" in July 1994. These visits also included delegations of very senior military and naval officers. Indeed, it is striking (and seemingly significant) that a

much higher degree of military aid from the PLA to the KPA did not stem from this series of visits, ranging from senior officials and officers down to working-level military exchanges. The personal relationship with Kim Il Sung may have been an important factor, for after his death 6 years ago, the pattern of visits changed markedly, with a notable decrease in frequency and the rank and stature of the officers and officials, plus the presence of a tone of symbolism and ceremony rather than one of serious working exchanges.<sup>25</sup>

PLA officers privately reported in the late 1990s that the KPA has grown more reclusive, secretive, and seemingly independent. For example, PLA Navy officers have not been welcome to go on board North Korean navy ships provided to Pyongyang by Beijing in earlier years. This suggests not only a distance between the services of the two countries but also a desire by the KPA forces not to be embarrassed by the poor materiel condition and degraded operational status of the transferred ships and equipment. PLA officers say that the exchanges between the two militaries have become largely mundane or perfunctory. Because of the DPRK's limited financial resources (despite the apparent outright purchase in 1999 of formerly Russian MiG-21 fighter aircraft from Kazakhstan in 1999), Chinese officials have said, Beijing has resorted to a policy of making only minor transfers of equipment and provision of training free of charge. This has included, for example, spare parts, ammunition, and the training of naval engineers.<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly, PLA officers go to some lengths to portray these transfers as innocuous, emphasizing, for example, that training is provided to "technical branch" officers and not combat units. A 1996 PLAN ship visit to North Korea was carefully described as nothing more than a minimal celebration of the 35th anniversary of the nearly defunct PRC-DPRK friendship agreement.<sup>27</sup> Chinese officers and officials portray the military relationship as stagnant and of little consequence, noting that communications by phone and other routine means are not conducted. When pressed,

one senior PLA officer did say that the full details of the relationship were known only by the most senior Chinese military officers, that neither side wished to publicize the relationship or draw attention to it.<sup>28</sup>

All this interesting and revealing, if incomplete, evidence suggests that China is likely supplying minimal or moderate (at most) military aid and doing it in ways and forms tailored to serve Beijing's national interests, with apparent limited concern about DPRK needs.<sup>29</sup> Beijing is pleased to keep the nature of the relationship and the specifics of transfers opaque, at least in part because it does not want to put up with the "supervision" of the international community, especially Washington's predictable views, concerning what China does for North Korea's armed forces. Concealment of the interesting details is also of value in preserving a good tone in relations with the ROK; the fewer specifics Seoul has to digest the better.

However, before waxing ecstatic about the lowly state of PLA support for the KPA, it should be recognized in the West that this level of cooperation and supply is probably sustainable essentially indefinitely and conceivably could facilitate concealment from international notice the scope or types of equipment. China is not, in this military relationship, prone to suffer from "donor fatigue" or constantly in danger of incurring international sanctions. China does not see support of the KPA as a short-term endeavor, reflecting Beijing's longstanding view of the probable long-term persistence of the current North Korean regime and its armed forces.

China and the ROK.

Over the last 2 decades, Beijing's policy toward the Koreas has evolved from one of viewing the Korean Peninsula as a single country suffering under illegitimate division, through a period of accepting as a practical matter the existence of the two countries, and now to the current



recognition that, both in practice and with respect to international law, there are two Koreas. The Cold War era's sharp focus by China on ideological considerations has all but dissolved, and in its place there are the clear outlines of rational economic policy: acceptance by the Chinese leaders of South Korea's amazing success and North Korea's abysmal failure—and trying to make the most out of the former and cope with the latter.

Furthermore, there is substantial evidence that many influential figures in Beijing have realized the overriding value of China's economic progress and prowess and concluded that China's regional security and comprehensive national power are served much better thereby than with the erratic modernization of the PLA. This evolution in Beijing's policy toward the two Koreas has, of course, favored China's relationship with the more solid and prosperous Seoul rather than strengthening its links to a needy and perverse Pyongyang.<sup>30</sup> It is interesting (if not precisely pertinent) to note, in this regard, that Beijing's economic and diplomatic ties to Seoul are far more solid, numerous, and important than Washington's recently improved but still tenuous links to Pyongyang—a development in these international relationships that not many experts would have forecast 20 years ago.

In the eyes of most observers, Beijing, with the establishment of diplomatic relations with the ROK in 1992, made clear its choice between Pyongyang and Seoul. Doubtlessly, the concept of nicely balanced relations between the two Koreas is important to China both at a practical level and as a source of pride in Beijing's diplomatic prowess. Nevertheless, Seoul has won out and is Beijing's preferred Korean associate. Beijing, of course, does not make public proclamations stating this in so many words, but the combination of pragmatic economic considerations and the prevailing Chinese forecast of the long-term outcome on the Korean Peninsula have made the choice of Seoul over Pyongyang a practical imperative.

China is striving (successfully) to position itself to (1) gain the maximum economic benefit for the time being, (2) ensure the best possible relations with the particular Korea that is virtually certain to come out on top in the long term, and (3) sustain brotherly relations and a measure of influence with the other Korea virtually certain to remain on the bottom. Put another way, Seoul, from Beijing's perspective, fully deserves careful cultivation as an economic partner. Beijing enthusiastically courts Seoul because of a very strong desire, even need, to pursue the great advantages, economic and diplomatic, to be gained from that burgeoning relationship. Pyongyang is undeserving but must not be ignored. The North Korean government's proclivity toward the role of troublemaker and the potential of the country, intentionally or inadvertently, to be a source of serious problems for China means that Beijing ignores or shuns the antics of the North Korean leadership at its peril. All these factors seem reflected in China's role in getting Kim Jong Il to visit Beijing before the North-South summit and then basking in the euphoric post-summit glow and in its implicit role as a facilitator of radical improvement in inter-Korean relations.

Beijing insightfully envisioned good economic relations with South Korea very early; significant indirect trade existed between China and South Korea by 1979. Beijing's early hope or vision for the relationship has, indeed, come to pass and, significantly, has weathered the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. Annual two-way trade between the ROK and PRC approaches \$25 billion,<sup>31</sup> and total South Korean direct investment in China is also very substantial, already having exceeded \$2.6 billion by 1996.<sup>32</sup> In recent years, the ROK became China's fourth most important trading partner; China was the ROK's third most important trading partner. Comparable ranks are forecast for the current year.<sup>33</sup>

Beyond these impressive statistics there is the additional factor that South Korea has tended to invest heavily in China's Northeast, a rust-belt region where

investment is particularly needed. South Korea has also made well-directed and welcome investments in the Bohai Gulf region including Shandong Province and the Tianjin area. In addition to the value to China of ROK trade and investment, South Korea has, from the outset, needed these investment opportunities in China, thus leading both countries to ensure that economic factors take priority in their relationship. Moreover, this almost single-minded emphasis by Beijing on China's economic development has reinforced a desire for the sort of stability on the Korean Peninsula that is essential to China's national economic progress.

However, economics and who comes out the winner between the two Koreas are not the whole picture in Beijing's view of South Korea. The other important Chinese foreign policy consideration is that of precluding the development of close relations between South Korea and Japan. Beijing is concerned, for example, about recent moves by Seoul toward closer ties with Tokyo, most notably recently warming military relations between ROK forces and the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF), including prospects for basic military exercises. In September 1998 the Director General of the Japanese Defense Agency and the ROK Minister of Defense agreed to regular meetings between senior officers of their naval forces and the conduct of annual joint exercises. Although the exercise conducted, lasting less than a week in August 1999, involved rescue operations at sea and not combat operations, this first-ever exercise between Japanese and South Korean naval forces aroused concern in Beijing.

Interestingly, advance arrangements were made for this same month, August 1999, to have the ROK minister of defense make a first-ever visit to Beijing, and the PRC minister of defense agreed during the visit to a first-ever visit to Seoul to take place in 2000. It has not been possible to discern if this flurry of "first-ever" events involving the defense ministers of the ROK and PRC was an effort to ameliorate concerns in Beijing about ROK military contacts

with Japan (as seemed to be the case) or whether there was a measure of coincidence. In any case, the ministers of the two 1950-53 Korean War adversaries, China and South Korea, established regular military relations including high-level visits on a 2-year cycle.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, they reportedly talked in January 2000 about the prospects for periodic meetings at their level and exchanges of visits by senior military officers as well as reciprocal port visits by the two navies and unspecified joint military exercises. Unquestionably, something has kindled an enhanced PRC-ROK military relationship.

The broader area of South Korean public attitudes toward China is also pertinent. While acknowledging the anecdotal nature of his observation, a leading scholar on China-Korea issues at a prestigious Chinese official think tank remarked that in his experience retired South Korean generals do not hate China—as they well might, given the adversarial period of the 1950s and the aftermath thereof. South Koreans in general do not have hard feelings toward the Chinese, he asserted. Indeed, in South Korean polls, China comes out often as the favorite foreign country, he proudly reported, noting pointedly that this is certainly not so for Japan, a country not liked by the Koreans.<sup>35</sup>

These anecdotal remarks are substantiated by surveys of South Korean citizens taken in the mid-to-late 1990s that illustrate Beijing's success in obtaining popular support in the ROK for China's position as an Asian good neighbor. In two popular surveys, two and three times as many South Koreans, respectively, considered Japan the country most threatening to ROK security as considered China to be the greatest threat. In three surveys, China, by a margin of about 10 percentage points over Japan in each poll, was consistently seen by South Koreans to be more important in promoting ROK interests. (The United States was judged more important than China, but by surprisingly meager margins of less than 10 percent. For example, in the 1997 survey, 41.1 percent judged the United States the most important for promoting ROK interests, 33.8 percent chose

China, 21.0 percent chose Japan, and 14.6 percent chose Russia.) In 1997, twice as many South Koreans wanted to strengthen relations with China as wanted to do so with Japan (55.6 percent to 25.3 percent).<sup>36</sup> So, in response to a variety of questions over a period of several years, South Koreans say they view China more favorably than Japan—just as the Chinese rather proudly assert to be the case. Moreover, South Korean affection for the United States is waning while China's status in these polls improves. This is all the more significant both because younger South Koreans tend to have a more favorable view of China than their elders, and, as years pass, the overall trend toward favoring China over Japan and the U.S. has increased.<sup>37</sup>

### China and the DPRK's Missiles, Proliferation, and Nuclear Weapons.

Beijing strives to be on the side of the angels with respect to Pyongyang's development of ballistic missiles, nuclear warheads, and transfers of missile technology to other countries. There is a tendency for Chinese interlocutors on these subjects to describe quite fully what China, they assert, *is not doing* and to say very few words about what China *is doing*. As one mid-level think tank research professor phrased it, "There is not support, but there is understanding."<sup>38</sup> This researcher and other Chinese specialists unhesitatingly point out that, in their view, North Korea feels understandably imperiled and has chosen this way to improve its security. Pyongyang feels threatened by powerful Asian neighbors and especially the Americans, present by the tens of thousands just across its southern border and exceedingly well equipped with the most modern arms, at a time when North Korea is in undeniably dire economic straits. North Korea is proud, and tries to make its people feel the government is effectively protecting them, the researcher went to great pains to explain. Simply put, as he explained with disarming candor, missiles are cheaper than airplanes; also, missile programs

have the proven effect of giving Pyongyang negotiating leverage in a dramatic way that nothing else could have done.

A more senior think tanker expressed a similar view from a different slant: "North Korea does have a different diplomatic style. It needs the air of crisis and occurrence of incidents to draw American attention."<sup>39</sup> This same senior specialist went on to say that North Korea's development of missiles is understandable to the Chinese; it resembles, he said, Mao's development of nuclear weapons for China. An isolated and weak country naturally seeks quick and easy solutions for its security. Missiles, he argued, are indeed easier to come by than complex combat aircraft and require less technology to maintain, support, and operate. South Korea and the United States are powerful enemies; Pyongyang has had to do something, he concluded.

The Chinese specialists, whose views are described here, and others who claim knowledge of the matter, dispute Western claims of recent Chinese support for North Korean missile programs. In short, their assertions are that China is at least no longer providing support for North Korea's missiles programs and has not done so since the end of the Cold War. One Chinese specialist insisted that China now helps North Korea's missile program with neither components nor technology; he did, however, confess there had been exchanges of views.<sup>40</sup> He claimed ignorance of previous instances of the transfer of missile technology or components to North Korea.<sup>41</sup> The associate research professor was somewhat more candid, saying that the relationship has a long history and that in the early days the situation was very different from now.

Contrary to the views of several Western observers (who assert that Beijing still supports Pyongyang's ballistic missile program), these interlocutors all agree that China is particularly unhappy now with North Korea's development of missiles because it gives Japan and the United States an excuse to develop TMD. A senior member of a think tank in

Beijing went beyond that, saying that the Indian, Pakistani, and North Korean missile programs are all bad for China's interests. However, he and a well-connected foreign service officer who has specialized in these matters argued that it is hard for Chinese to talk to sovereign North Korea about missile development proliferation issues. Beijing, they say, cannot publicly criticize Pyongyang on this count given the overall nature of the relationship.<sup>42</sup>

When pressed on why Beijing "allowed" Pyongyang to transfer, over a period of years beginning in the late 1980s, technology and missiles for Pakistan's *Ghauri* and *Ghauri 2* missile programs, Chinese specialists deny or dissemble. They do go so far as to argue that subtle means in private meetings are the way Beijing feels it must handle proliferation issues, as the senior think tanker explained previously. The Chinese Foreign Service officer mentioned above elaborated, saying that Beijing avoids "instructing" North Korea in order to be more effective in its influence across the board. He went on to say that China is not confident in its knowledge of what Pyongyang has done as far as the transfer of missiles and missile-related technologies. Consequently, Pyongyang can simply deny the allegations because China does not have proof.

Although China's interests indeed lie in a permanent cessation of North Korean missile tests, specifically because Japan will want TMD more strongly in the face of further tests, China, these specialists argue, finds it difficult to oppose a sovereign government's testing of missiles for its defense (regardless of how provocative to Tokyo and Beijing). Similarly, Beijing feels it cannot object to the transfer by North Korea of missiles or missile technology if these transfers are within the limits of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)—which the Chinese, somewhat smugly, suggest is the appropriate standard by which Beijing and others should evaluate such conduct.<sup>43</sup>

Chinese specialists on this matter make two additional points. First, The Russian connection is important in North

Korean ballistic missile development. *Taepo-dong* technology they assert is basically Russian technology.<sup>44</sup> China was not informed in advance of the notorious August 31, 1998, missile launch.<sup>45</sup> Second, North Korea, as the Chinese see it, is not a threat, and clearly not a threat to the territory of the United States. To label North Korea a threat, they argue, is to ignore its desperate economic and social plight and its meager resources that preclude its building a significant missile arsenal. And contrary to some Western convictions, the Chinese argue, North Korean leaders are rational and know it would be suicidal to conduct a “pre-emptive strike” with its missiles against Japan or the United States.

Chinese positions on these issues are different but not diametrically opposed to those of the United States. Nevertheless, these arguments by knowledgeable Chinese specialists make it clear that Beijing is, as a general matter, considerably more sanguine than Washington and Tokyo about the current situation and prospects for North Korea with respect to the development of ballistic missiles and the proliferation of missiles and missile technology to embrace countries Washington considers rogue states (as of June 2000, termed “states of concern” by the U.S. Secretary of State). Chinese arguments take into account Washington’s positions and attempt somewhat subtly in most cases to undermine or weaken the American argument, all the while avoiding direct confrontation or the danger of having Beijing labeled by the international community as either unconcerned with the dangers or blatantly abetting North Korea’s objectionable conduct. This is another nice Chinese balancing act, facilitated by the ability of an authoritarian government to orchestrate its publicly stated positions and not have them attacked by knowledgeable domestic critics.

Although one cannot be sure of the motives of China’s top leaders, those who address the issues in public and privately with Western interlocutors seem convinced of the merits of China’s “principled positions” and the failure (or refusal) of Washington to view these matters in the proper



light. There is a glimmer of hope that Chinese concerns about the prospective development and deployment of TMD in East Asia might prompt Beijing to pressure Pyongyang to curb its *Taepo-dong* tests and overall ballistic missile program. As was seen in the July 2000 suggestion that North Korea may give up its missile program, Russian President Putin seems to have exercised some of the clout many think Beijing should apply with Pyongyang—and for the same reason that applies to Beijing: trying to eliminate North Korean missiles as an incentive to Washington not to proceed with development of missile defenses. At least there is now the reasonable hope that measures to bring about this result may somehow be applied by Moscow, Beijing, Washington, Seoul, and/or Tokyo.<sup>46</sup> In trying to make such an argument effective with Beijing, it must be taken into account that Beijing is already poised to respond that North Korea is not by any reasonable measure a real threat and that TMD must be seen in its real light: ultimately an attempt to neutralize the most effective component of China's armed forces, its arsenal of short-range and medium-range ballistic missiles; in other words, a means to contain China.

Moreover, Beijing does not wish to find itself (even very remotely) a part of Washington's efforts to influence Pyongyang—and especially not to be associated with agreement verification activities. China sees great peril in such a path. When Beijing sees Pyongyang subjecting itself to intrusive inspections, such as that of the suspected underground nuclear facility at Kumchangni, and the inspections related to its compliance with the Agreed Framework (explained further below), it grows wary that inspection regimes of that sort might be urged or even forced on China. The secretive Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party consider such inspections anathema and a blatant violation of China's sovereignty intended to expose Chinese secrets and weaknesses and take unfair advantage of backward and developing China.

*The Nuclear Weapons Issue.* Always ready with a “principled position” as a retort (or diversion), Chinese specialists, when asked about how seriously they oppose a nuclear DPRK, somewhat surprisingly assert that Beijing is more concerned about the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan than is Washington. As one interlocutor put it, the United States is unduly concerned in East Asia about North Korean missile tests and a “low-level nuclear weapon development effort” and not appropriately concerned about the big threats in South Asia of India and Pakistan, where nuclear testing is not just an American fear but something that has actually occurred—many times.<sup>47</sup>

Chinese analysts of recent Asian nuclear developments argue that the United States is far harsher in its attitude toward, and treatment of, North Korea than it is with respect to India, a real nuclear threat, as they put it—failing, understandably, to include their nuclear ally, Pakistan, in the indictment. The Chinese senior think tank member interviewed in Beijing put it in somewhat more clinical terms. He pointed out that, contrary to the South Asian example, North Korea has not tested a nuclear weapon, although it might well have done so as early as 1994, the year the United States became so concerned about this prospect and consequently negotiated with Pyongyang the Agreed Framework. (This document, controversial in the eyes of many, was designed to halt North Korea’s nuclear program and was completed in Geneva in October 1994. Its detractors, primarily in the United States, remain adamant that it is unworkable and doomed to failure—a failure they forecast is destined inevitably to produce disastrous results, including a nuclear-armed DPRK.)

*China and KEDO.* China does not make contributions to the funding for Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).<sup>48</sup> China’s arguments for failing or refusing to contribute come in layers. The superficial reason is that China is both poor and does not want to interfere in North Korean affairs, with more emphasis on the point that China allegedly has no money to contribute to the

program—an argument hard to swallow given the growth of the Chinese economy over the last 2 decades and the size of China's foreign currency reserves. The next level of the expressed Chinese rationale for nonparticipation is that China wants to help North Korea in its own way, not through KEDO. China and the United States, it is argued by the Chinese, have some common interests in North Korea but also some differences. Beijing does not want to be lumped together with Tokyo, Seoul, and Washington in the way aid and support are provided to Pyongyang. China wants to be different. The Chinese say they understand North Korean psychology well (implying that others do so less well). Beijing knows how, in Asian style, to deal with Pyongyang and show respect as needed to bring good results.<sup>49</sup>

What appears to be the last layer of the Chinese rationale for not contributing to KEDO puts a finer point on the argument: As one very authoritative source put it, China provides very significant food aid to North Korea, sometimes on concessionary terms. More important, China meets important energy needs of North Korea through the provision of coal and oil; oil is by far the most important. China prefers to provide for these energy needs independent of KEDO not just because it does not want to be lumped in with other countries but importantly because North Korea does not want China to switch to the KEDO conduit. North Korea does not want Chinese aid linked to KEDO, apparently implying a fear by Pyongyang of complications, uncertainty, political machinations, etc.; and, moreover, North Korean leaders often ask for (and obtain) concessions and other special treatment.<sup>50</sup>

So Beijing's position with respect to nuclear weapons development in North Korea, is, as has been seen in other areas, superficially similar but hardly identical to that of Washington. As with missiles and proliferation, China does not *support* nuclear weapon development by Pyongyang. However, Beijing does not find its interest in precise coincidence with the international effort under KEDO

designed to prevent North Korean nuclear weapon development—and it makes its case for nonparticipation on the basis of “principled” reasoning. Many in Washington see Beijing’s positions in a sinister light; Beijing sees Washington’s positions as simply unenlightened.

### The Potential for North Korean Chaos and Collapse.

Professor Chu Shulong, recognized as a preeminent scholar on Sino-Korean relations and policies at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR, a think tank closely linked to components of the PRC government), prepared two lengthy papers in English, one in mid-1999 and the other late in that year. Both extensively described and analyzed Chinese policy and attitudes concerning the Korean Peninsula. Significantly, neither paper alludes to the prospects for North Korean collapse and chaos.<sup>51</sup> As another Chinese specialist explained in early 2000, Chinese who concentrate on North Korean issues have never thought that North Korea would collapse and now think it highly unlikely, if not impossible, that a collapse would occur under its current leader, Kim Jong Il.<sup>52</sup>

*Collapse Called an Unlikely Scenario.* Chinese, the specialist said, are firmly convinced that North Korea will not collapse, and he provided his list of reasons.

1. Chinese who study the issue believe the 1993 assertion of the South Korean Ministry for Reunification that North Koreans were absolutely loyal to Kim Il Sung and believe now that North Koreans accept Kim Jong Il as the “idealistic” successor leader (meaning that the son is the philosophical and conceptual successor to his father).

2. Kim Jong Il has strong control over the secret police and the military. There is no strong force to organize the people to subvert the current regime.

3. South Korea does not want, and therefore does not promote, rapid collapse of the North. Among the many

reasons for this is that South Korea is not as wealthy as West Germany, and North Korea is poorer than was East Germany. Consequently, the German model is considered inapplicable to Korea.

4. North Koreans have a very simple life. They can withstand hardships that might bring about the downfall of other regimes elsewhere around the world.

5. Americans do not want the rapid collapse of North Korea and, just as with South Korea, do not attempt to facilitate collapse. Both countries even take steps to avoid that outcome. According to the analysis of this Chinese specialist, were North Korea to collapse, the U.S. Congress would then ask why U.S. forces should stay in Korea. Then the Japanese, and especially the Okinawans, would raise the issue of why they alone in Asia had to endure U.S. troops on their soil.<sup>53</sup>

In the mid-1990s, a representative of a prominent Chinese think tank contended those in Seoul and Washington who forecast doom for North Korea are engaged in wishful thinking. He asserted that Beijing has counseled Seoul that a collapse scenario is something that should not be seriously contemplated and, further, let it be known that Beijing would be highly displeased with efforts by Seoul to promote a collapse—urging instead that Seoul direct its efforts to reducing tensions and improving relations. The Chinese who offered this advice to Seoul are, no doubt, elated with the conciliatory policies toward North Korea under the current South Korean president, who was elected in December 1997, and with the apparently successful June 2000 North-South summit.

When Professor Chu of CICIR, the author of the two papers cited above, was subsequently pressed in a spring 2000 interview with the author in Beijing, he said he does not believe any communist country will collapse as a direct result of economic troubles. China endured great hardship and did not collapse. East European countries did not collapse because of a failed economy, he asserted, although

economic difficulties did push to the fore political problems that led to collapse. The survivability of communist countries is very high under economic stress, Chu argued. Nonetheless, if North Korea's economic problems increase greatly, China will go all out to prevent chaos.

*North Koreans Seen as Resilient and Tough.* Other Chinese have been more "personal" in their reasoning. They say simply that the North Korean people, as mentioned earlier, have proven themselves to be at least as tough and resilient as the Chinese who suffered the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, both resulting in large numbers of needless deaths and other extreme stresses on Chinese society; yet the government did not fall, and the country did not collapse. Starvation and other deprivation in North Korea, unlike in other countries of the world whose people have much higher expectations from the government and for their own lives, are not likely catalysts for North Korean collapse or even chaos.

Chinese analysts of Korea have been making this point for many years and feel the passage of time has validated their analysis; they simply do not think the subject currently warrants significant continuing discussion. They largely consider, a bit smugly, that two points have been made: North Korea is not on the brink of collapse, and Americans and others who made the dire forecasts in the mid-to-late 1990s have been proven wrong. Chinese scholars and diplomats who discuss North Korea with Americans recognize that among American specialists on East Asia the talk of collapse long ago faded away, and that Americans are looking to other outcomes for which they are seeking appropriate descriptions and rationale, such as reconciliation.

*North Korean Economic Collapse.* But what of a purely economic collapse or meltdown, somehow lacking a "political" component? Although China is many times larger, more prosperous, and more populous than North Korea, the Chinese argue that they could not at this

juncture in their economic development reasonably meet the full North Korean requirements for assistance were the country completely to collapse economically. This is a significant departure from the quite confident Chinese attitude in 1996, despite China's rather paltry level of support at the time, that Beijing simply had to make the decision to go all out and salvage the North Korean economy if collapse appeared imminent.

As discussed in the section on Chinese views of North Korea, China is promoting economic reform for North Korea, but North Korea is stubborn. A Chinese specialist who had dealt with these issues in the 1990s argued recently that North Korea should change its policies; it should not continue indefinitely to depend on foreign aid. Instead it should provide an environment conducive to foreign investment; it should reduce restrictions on foreign investment. He pointed out that North Korea said initially it would accept investment only from large South Korean firms, but these are few. Indicating that some positive movement may be occurring, he said that, since 1999, North Korea has allowed investment by a few small companies.<sup>54</sup>

Chinese exasperation with Pyongyang's reluctance, or even refusal, to reform earlier may have waned a bit, but the signs that might indicate real, fundamental reform in the North are not compelling. Another Chinese specialist, working temporarily in Washington, affirmed that China, concerned about its own economic prospects, now has diminished capability and greatly reduced will to supply North Korea with all it needs or wants. China now does only what it can; not what North Korea wants.

Given Japanese and American reluctance and constraints, South Korea is the only big supporter of North Korea and seems to have largely recovered from the Asian financial crisis that struck in late 1997. In any event, Chinese leaders do not want to see Pyongyang left without recourse and tempted to try anything with nothing to lose. They almost certainly view the visit to Beijing by Kim Jong

II, the June 2000 North-South summit, and the promise of possibly rapidly improving ties between North Korea and South Korea as highly desirable steps down a path that will both prevent North Korean economic collapse and also preserve South Korea as a valued, strong economic partner for China.<sup>55</sup>

Reunification? Reconciliation? Integration?  
Perpetual Partition?

China objects to being lumped together with those nations said to favor the indefinite division of Korea. The views of Chinese specialists are nuanced, and not identically so. For example, among those with optimistic outlooks the argument is that Beijing simply does not oppose Korean reunification. China, in this formulation, wants peaceful reunification, with South Korea helping to bring about North Korean reform. The role of China and the United States should be circumscribed; neither should interfere but both should provide aid.<sup>56</sup>

The view generally attributed to the Chinese government is a bit less optimistic, particularly about the time frame for possible reunification. The official position is that maintaining stability and achieving a peaceful resolution are a higher priority than any early reunification; or, put a slightly different way, Beijing supports only “peaceful” and “reasonable” means of Korean reunification.<sup>57</sup> That said, Beijing does not ignore the (ultimately good) example of Vietnam: Reunification there caused some problems for China but was generally advantageous for the Chinese economy—and that was what counted. There are two goals: (1) for the short term, permanent peace in place of a temporary armistice arrangement, and (2) reunification (or possibly “integration,” as a well-informed official termed China’s reunification hopes for the two Koreas) for the longer term. China’s perceived role is to push and encourage these. After reunification or “complete integration,” China’s role would



be to maintain a balance of power in the region, a balance that should include China, Japan, the United States, and possibly Russia.<sup>58</sup>

A Beijing think-tanker offered what might be the most candid appraisal of China's position on reunification.<sup>59</sup> Beijing's first priority with respect to the Korean Peninsula is stability so as to foster China's continued economic progress. He pointed out that his home is in Northeast China, so he also thinks of this in personal terms. Among his concerns is that instability would equal refugees (as examined earlier in this paper), likely a very disruptive factor both economically and socially. China, he argued, has a carefully balanced policy for the two Koreas that is specifically designed to promote stability; it is not just a policy of diplomatic nicety. The second priority is reunification. Indeed, a reunified Korea may be good for China, and, indeed, it is appropriate to support and encourage reunification as an example for a proper outcome of the China-Taiwan situation. Furthermore, a united Korea would be a good friend of China as well as an important economic partner. In further candor, this senior researcher injected that he does not know what process might lead to reunification.

There are additional perspectives that warrant mention: Other Chinese specialists have been equally candid, if more pessimistic, for the short term, suggesting that reunification may take decades, maybe 20, 30, or 50 years. Unlike Taiwan, they feel, there is no hurry. From China's perspective, nothing is going so badly awry for China's interests in either Korea that reunification is an early imperative. Those Chinese who are familiar with the use of the term reconciliation by some senior Americans (with respect to resolution of the division of the Koreas) do not recoil at its use. They seem to equate it roughly with the Chinese preference for the term integration—possibly an early stage of a process leading to “complete integration.” For whatever reason, these Chinese do not acknowledge the proposition, suggested by many outside of China, that their

government favors prolonged division of Korea as something that is in China's interest.<sup>60</sup> They object to what they term a Western notion that a weak and divided Korea is preferred by Beijing because a strong and unified Korea will be a military threat. They look to a strong and prosperous unified Korea as the best outcome for China—especially for China's economy. Although the analogy is flawed, the reasoning smacks of logic similar to the American assertion that a prosperous, stable, strong, and unified China is preferred by Washington over a country weak, fragmented, unstable, and needy. Just as many Chinese doubt the sincerity of the American argument about the characteristics of a preferred China, many Americans will, naturally, doubt the Chinese expressed preference for a unified, strong, and stable Korean Peninsula—eventually.

#### The Future for American Military Forces on the Korean Peninsula.

*A Historical Glance.* Before peering into the probable future Chinese attitude toward U.S. forces in Korea, a glance at the past provides valuable perspective and context. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s and into the beginning of the 1970s were a period of staunch Chinese opposition to U.S. forces in Korea. This opposition originated as far back as the U.S. support of the Chinese National Party (the Kuomintang [KMT] that fled to Taiwan in defeat) against the Chinese Communist Party in the 1945-49 civil war. It was mightily reinforced when Chinese and American forces fought against each other in the Korean War of the early 1950s and again when the United States, with its South Korean ally, pursued a policy toward the PRC of isolation and containment. The remainder of the 1970s and 1980s saw a change of the Chinese position as the United States and the PRC together faced the Soviet threat. Chinese leaders were content during this latter period with the presence of U.S. forces in Korea, despite official support of North Korean demands for their removal. After the Cold

War ended, Beijing became ambivalent, no longer pleased by the American presence but recognizing that some advantages accrued to China from that presence, not the least of which was the singular contribution of these forces to stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region. This stability facilitated unprecedented Chinese economic growth, although many Chinese observers are reluctant to acknowledge that benefit of the American military presence.<sup>61</sup>

*A Note of Realism in China's Chorus of "Principled Positions."* It is also useful to understand China's fundamental position now, at the beginning of the first decade of this century, on U.S. forces in Asia. (This means, of course, in South Korea and Japan, the only remaining locations for U.S. forces that were in earlier decades spread much more widely and, in some cases, densely in the region.) As a Chinese specialist described the position, China opposes in principle the presence of foreign forces in the region, but Chinese leaders are realistic. They see that the countries of Southeast Asia want the U.S. forces in the region. The Japanese and South Korean governments want U.S. military forces and bases in Japan and Korea. The Japanese and South Korean people are uncertain, with anti-American protests swelling in South Korea. The political right wing in Japan does not want the U.S. military on Japanese soil. This right wing movement, however, advocates making Japan an "ordinary"<sup>62</sup> state, with the final goal of having the United States out of Japan so as to achieve "full Japanese independence." Japanese right-wingers and nationalists together make a formidable faction.

In light of this, several Chinese analysts, who are objective and willing to be candid, describe the U.S. military presence in Japan as having dual tracks: (1) preventing China from causing a problem; and (2) keeping Japan under control, preventing a new kind of militarism in Japan, and keeping Japan developing on a peaceful road. Beijing, they argue, wants the United States to recognize China's

interests in the region and recognize Chinese sovereignty and territory—including Taiwan. American forces should not, of course, be employed in ways that contravene these precepts. Contrary to allegations by others, they assert very adamantly, China does not want to compete with the United States for a dominant role in the region.<sup>63</sup>

Other Chinese interlocutors over the past 4 years have helped flesh out the details of the Chinese position. Because of China's "principled opposition" to the presence of military forces on foreign soil, government spokesmen when pressed will consistently and persistently state the obligatory opposition to troops on foreign soil. However, Chinese specialists frequently assert that China does not object to the presence of U.S. forces if their presence is consistent with the wishes of the people and governments of Korea and Japan. Some elaborate to the extent of pointing out that this would mean all the peoples of Korea were the North and South reunified, but they do not try to explain how such wishes would be determined or confirmed.<sup>64</sup> The point is sometimes made that Beijing's more relaxed attitude toward American military power in Asia is evidenced by the fact that the issue of U.S. forces in Korea is at the bottom of China's agenda of regional concerns, but, in contrast, the matter is always at the top of Pyongyang's list. Cited as further indirect evidence is that, although the Soviet Union is no longer a threat, Beijing has nevertheless not pressed for ejecting the United States from the ROK and Japan. (The likely futility of making such a request, in blatant disregard for the concerns of Seoul and Tokyo, is ignored by those who gratuitously make this point.)

*What Purpose would U.S. Forces Serve? China Wonders.* There is, nevertheless, an interesting nuance that has crept into some discussions by Chinese officials actually working these matters—practitioners, not scholars or think tankers. These officials press the point that the *purpose* of U.S. forces in Korea would weigh heavily in Beijing's calculus about how to react to their continued presence after reunification. If there is no alternative but to conclude that U.S. forces, by

the nature and composition of the force or the character of American pronouncements about that forward-deployed force, are there to contain or act against China (especially in a Taiwan matter), then it will be difficult for Beijing to do anything but strongly oppose the U.S. presence. This somewhat contorted position might be rephrased as follows: Beijing would need to be able to conclude that U.S. forces in Korea were not there to contain China or aid Taiwan; Washington might take the view that Beijing understands the United States has no intention of using force against China—with the unspoken implication that such action would not be taken unless egregious Chinese behavior demanded it.<sup>65</sup> In other words, both sides might need to apply their own interpretations and agree tacitly not to look for contradictions or complications that both sides would recognize could be found by digging too vigorously—and imprudently.

One of these Chinese officials recently elaborated this position in a way that may appeal to Americans, saying that the Korean Peninsula is “sandwiched” between China and Japan and also between China and the United States. Beijing, he said, expects U.S. forces to remain on the Korean Peninsula to maintain this balance of power, even if other factors have caused the United States to remove its forces from Japan.<sup>66</sup> It is not so much that these positions expressed by Chinese interlocutors can or should be taken at face value. The important thing is that Chinese officials are openly and candidly discussing with American interlocutors the circumstances under which U.S. forces might remain in a unified Korea and not draw the wrath of Beijing. Certainly, Beijing has no veto on U.S. force deployment decisions, but there is much to say for avoiding contentious issues in Sino-U.S. relations, especially as they apply to American military forces in the region.

China Institute of Contemporary International Relations division director Chu Shulong wrote last year, “In the relationship between American alliances, American military forces in Asia, and Taiwan, the Chinese position

has been clear and consistent and will remain unchanged in the future, no matter the state of the relationship between China and the United States."<sup>67</sup> Chu also wrote in the same paper, "Certainly it will be the Koreans' decision whether to let American troops continue to stay in a united Korea and whether to keep the U.S.-Korea alliance. Since there are no indications that China-Korea relations will be troubled in the future, U.S. troops in a united Korea are unlikely to play any function against China."<sup>68</sup> In March 2000, a noted Chinese specialist on security issues concerning Korea said that Beijing's attitude toward U.S. forces in Korea depends on the status of U.S.-China relations. Only Taiwan can produce a really hostile relationship; there is no other reason for hostility. China generally does not criticize the U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula—just offering occasional criticism of some specific exercises, he concluded.<sup>69</sup>

*Evidence of a Dramatic, Ongoing Change in Chinese Attitudes toward U.S. Forces in Asia.* The attitudes of at least some influential figures in China concerning U.S. forces in Korea have changed significantly in the recent past as a consequence of the view that the United States has a new proclivity for abusing its status as the world's sole superpower, displaying hegemonism, and acting as an irresponsible interventionist (all Chinese descriptions of recent American military undertakings, of course, with the Kosovo-Yugoslavia air campaign most prominent).<sup>70</sup> As a Chinese security scholar<sup>71</sup> who has observed the phenomenon and was willing to discuss it said,

The Kosovo War [his term] caused a shift in Chinese thinking on the matter of tolerance for U.S. forces in Asia. China now feels surrounded by the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances.

He went on to explain that this is not a consequence of Marxist logic (apparently as some Americans conclude) but rather is "based on Chinese observation of U.S. words and actions."

He explained further that, as others had told the author, Chinese see U.S. characterization of North Korea as an enemy as nothing more than an excuse for such actions as the development of the Revised Defense Guidelines (for the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty) and the development and eventual regional deployment of TMD. This Chinese security scholar said North Korea is very weak and surely cannot project power. In China, the U.S. portrayal of the North Korean threat is considered a joke. Other Chinese analysts see improving relations between Washington and Pyongyang and the plight of the DPRK economy as factors lessening the potential threat from North Korean ballistic missiles. The fact that several years will pass before TMD could become an effective deployed force causes others to speculate that North Korea may no longer exist by that time.<sup>72</sup> These Chinese specialists are determined both in their conviction that there is no real North Korean threat and in persuading Americans of that assertion.

Additionally, the reintroduction of U.S. forces into the Philippines and the introduction of a U.S. military presence in Singapore are considered by the Chinese as revealing indicators of sinister, or at least hegemonic, American intentions in Asia. All this, together with such things as the proposed TSEA, the extremely controversial Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, originated by the very pro-Taiwan Senator Jesse Helms, under consideration in the U.S. Congress,<sup>73</sup> concern China. The Chinese see in this ominous combination the makings of future containment, despite American protests to the contrary. When Washington talks of a "strategic pause" for the United States between now and 2010 or 2015, the concept of preventive diplomacy takes on the appearance of preventive defense—preventing China from achieving its rightful place and full potential, as the Chinese see it.

The Chinese security scholar, interviewed in Washington in late April 2000, went on to explain that this viewpoint is very popular among the military in China. Chinese are especially troubled by the U.S. inclination to

place human rights concerns over the honoring of national sovereignty and fear that the United States will use its "tools" as means to intervene in Asia. The tools, he explained, are its forces and arrangements in Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, etc. He regretted that this attitude had developed, pointing out that, although China publicly opposes foreign forces in any country, privately China had accepted the status quo of U.S. alliances in Asia. Among the reasons for the acceptance is the practical one that there has been no way for China to change that situation. China wants, of course, to ensure that Taiwan is not encompassed in these arrangements, he emphasized. But China, even as a rising power, has not previously sought to change the status quo. It was apparent that this rather young scholar was representing a hope among his peers that the allegedly rising opposition to U.S. forces in Asia he described, particularly among PLA officers, would not serve to reverse the longstanding tolerance or even acceptance in China of the U.S. forces in Korea (and Japan)—even after there is significant change on the Korean Peninsula.

So far, this chapter has reviewed and attempted to provide insights into the Chinese views of its enduring multifaceted relations with troublesome North Korea; its newer yet firm and still growing affection for richer and more stable South Korea; its support of better North-South relations; its involvement in, and reactions to, North Korea's nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and proliferation activities; its disagreement with collapse and chaos scenarios; its conservative and patient approach to, but not rejection of, reunification and reconciliation concepts; and its possibly surprising tolerance of, or at least ambivalence about, the issue of U.S. forces in Korea now and in the future.



## SCRUTINY AND ANALYSIS OF CHINESE POSITIONS, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES; IMPLICATIONS FOR WASHINGTON AND OTHER CAPITALS

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to taking stock of matters reviewed earlier and the related issues that such an examination raises, as well as attempting to ascertain the implications for U.S. policy and that of other governments involved.

### China's Ultimate Goals Concerning the Korean Peninsula.

One experienced Chinese specialist<sup>74</sup> distilled China's goals with respect to the Korean Peninsula to a few short sentences: Beijing does not want to see a Korea hostile to China or a Korea allied with another country so that the alliance is hostile to China. China does not want to see a chaotic Korea. Beijing does not want to see nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, but it does not give nearly as high a priority to this issue as does Washington. In this synopsis, he did not specifically mention reunification. Only in response to a specific query did he describe the often-repeated position that stability on the peninsula is the clear top priority, stability that is essential to economic growth for China, Korea, and the region. Reunification, as we have seen, is a second priority, but, as is argued by virtually all Chinese specialists, China does "sincerely support" a reunified, reconciled, or integrated Korea, eventually—with the preferred time frame for ending the division of the peninsula dependent on the interlocutor but rarely less than two or three decades.

*The Complexities of the Chinese View of Reunification.* Despite the expressed views, Chinese support for Korean reunification is doubted or denied by many observers outside China. Some Chinese argue that Westerners and Japanese are improperly applying their own logic processes and preferences to Beijing's thinking—engaging in

inappropriate “mirroring” and therefore arriving at an inaccurate result. Possibly it does not matter a great deal whether Beijing means what it says about reunification. If Beijing publicly supports reunification, maybe that is as much as one can hope to know with any certainty. Maybe it helps even when Chinese suggest that Korean unification would set a good example for the “Taiwan problem.”

The Chinese Communist Party does not seem to fear the spin-offs of reunification on which others speculate. The Chinese are not concerned about the probable eventual presence of a highly successful, unified, and democratic neighbor, reasoning, it appears, that if a successful ROK has had no substantive effect on the PRC, then an expansion of the example to all of Korea is also not to be feared. Chinese observers see no importance to the relative timing of possible resolutions of the problems of Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet with respect to Korean reunification because China simply views its own problems in these three areas as wholly internal affairs, while the Korean issue is now accepted by China as a matter between two sovereign states.

*One Country, Two Systems—for Korea?* Chinese specialists occasionally discuss the concept of one country, two systems (as applied to Hong Kong and Macao and offered by the PRC as the formula for Taiwan) as it might apply to the Koreas, but they do not do so seriously—generally seeing it as a concept or application generated by Westerners unfamiliar with the differences between the Korean situation of two states and that of China and its sovereignty issues. It seems more likely that Chinese interlocutors are chary about applying this concept, so dear to Chinese mainlanders, to the Korean situation. Maybe there is a measure of unspoken distaste among the Chinese for the prospect of Koreans using this “sacred” mantra, somehow tainting this concept that is so central to China’s determination to achieve reunification with Taiwan. Nevertheless, “one country, two systems” is an apt description of the direction in which the two Koreas

seemed headed, at least at the conclusion of the meetings of the Kims (North and South) in Pyongyang in June 2000.

*Testing the Truth of Chinese Assertions of Support for Reunification.* The Chinese want the West and the Koreans to accept that China favors eventual Korean unification, accomplished peacefully and while preserving stability. Nevertheless, Beijing persistently, if inadvertently, feeds the doubts of outsiders. For example, if the reunification issue is not attacked head-on, addressed very directly, in exchanges with Chinese specialists, the talk often takes a turn that seems incompatible with support for reunification, even as a secondary priority. In other words, when a related issue is raised, the assumption of reunification does not necessarily underlie the unwitting answer.<sup>75</sup> Three cases illustrate the point: (1) The recent increasing talk of China's treating North Korea as a "more normal state," and (2) Chinese specialists' complaints that Americans and South Koreans (often American-educated, it is said pointedly) have at best a superficial understanding of China's relations with North Korea, both suggest a mindset more supportive of preservation of the status quo than movement toward reunification. These two cases are often followed up by a third—by the Chinese complaint that the South Koreans and Americans have no experience with socialist societies like China and North Korea. Once again, this seems to display a latent or underlying view toward the two Koreas that prefers continued division to the prospect of integration. At least, China is not urgently preparing to cope with a unified Korea.

Of course, one cannot be sure how Chinese policymakers and those we assume represent their policies feel "in their hearts" about this issue. Furthermore, on an issue as complex and as important to China as Korean reunification, there are doubtless unresolved internal debates and a desire to retain flexibility, given the variety of stressful circumstances that might surround a reunification scenario.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, after several years of hearing and sifting through Chinese views on reunification, I find it hard

to accept that there is a solid line of misrepresentation by all, including many who are unexpectedly candid on other issues and who seem truly to value intellectual integrity. Consequently, it seems increasingly credible that Beijing means what its various spokesmen say: Stability on the Korean Peninsula, with its economic spin-off, far outweighs Chinese interest in reunification, but China supports eventual "complete integration" and does not in the long term either fear the specter of a unified Korea or so value a socialist brother state or buffer that it would work actively against reunification. Also, it is understandable that there is no hurry in China for reunification. One is reminded of the now largely defunct alarms predicting imminent North Korean collapse so commonly raised in the West just a few years ago and roundly jeered (then and now) by Chinese specialists. That recollection may well bolster the Chinese feeling that they, once more, have it right on North Korea. They may be quite confident, even cocky, in concluding that the reunification process could be destabilizing: that reunification will be exceedingly difficult and complex, prone to fail (even if there is much initial good will on both sides), and is a matter of little, if any, real urgency.

There are also good reasons to believe that Beijing, indeed, favors eventual reunification and that such talk is not just a smokescreen to hide a real preference for continued separation. It is easy to be cynical about Chinese leaders' actions and apparent intransigence on this and other issues. (Many, but hardly all, of them are easy to dislike, disbelieve, and even despise.) But, trying to look past the cynicism, Beijing indeed seems to look to the prospect that Korea, unified at the right time in the right way, will serve China's interests in a number of ways and solve some enduring problems for Beijing, such as the following:

- It seems reasonable to speculate that Beijing does not wish to continue indefinitely to supply North Korea with very large amounts of oil, often at bargain prices—a

commodity that, since 1993, China itself has to import in large and steadily increasing quantities.

- Beijing does not want to worry endlessly that the invaluable South Korean investment in China's Manchuria, Shandong Province, and the area around Tianjin will dry up as a result of South Korea's resources being redirected to rebuild and rejuvenate a North Korea whose economy and infrastructure are left indefinitely to worsen and ultimately collapse, when joining with South Korea would seem to preclude such a disaster.

- China's leaders do not want to tolerate forever the inescapable concern that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, or his successor, will bring to a sudden halt the regional stability that China has striven so long to preserve, with all that implies for China's economic and security situation.

- Beijing entertains the hope that a revitalized northern half of the Korean Peninsula will some day become an economic asset to the bordering areas of China, a prospect that many think laughable now, but a prospect that a patient and persevering China has elected not to forgo, even if it takes to mid century or beyond to come to pass. This is a form of very long-term relief for China's Northeast rust belt.

*What of the Chinese Military?* Put bluntly, the Central Military Commission and General Staff Department would like to concentrate on the challenge of coping with Taiwan and avoiding confrontation with the United States—not on Korean concerns and contingencies. To put a finer point on these concerns:

- The PLA, for the next 50 years, would like not to have to fret over (or maybe even actually plan for) every Korean contingency from blocking huge refugee flows northbound out of the DPRK to pouring PLA troops southward across the Yalu River once again.

- PLA leaders, even those who may not remember clearly the horrific casualty statistics of the 1950s war in Korea, must find daunting the prospects (even if unlikely) of

being forced to march south and face the world's most advanced military—and having to find out just how much support hated Japan will provide to ensure embarrassing defeat for the Chinese they disdain, the Chinese who constantly tell the world that Japan is the real next threat to Asian peace and a country ready to produce nuclear weapons.

Possibly the list of reasons compiled here by the author has been skewed by listening too long to too many Chinese specialists, but it does seem that the reasons for China to favor ultimate reunification, as it says it does, outweigh those for preserving the awkward and troublesome status quo indefinitely.

These somewhat optimistic tentative conclusions, based on attempts somehow to fathom the fundamental Chinese convictions on reunification, do not mean that Beijing's hopes for the future of the Koreas will make Washington happy and Americans content. It should be remembered that, although the Chinese expect Seoul to govern a reunified Korea, they also expect that this unified Korea will lean much more toward Beijing than is currently the case. Certainly an integrated Korea, as the Chinese envision it, would have better relations by far with China than with Japan. Possibly (eventually) the Sino-Korean ties, Beijing hopes, could evolve in such a way that Seoul is more comfortable with Beijing than with Washington: Asian issues to be managed by Asians, not by Americans.

*Chinese Views of U.S. Forces in Korea and the U.S.-ROK Alliance.* A somewhat similar perplexity applies to Chinese attitudes toward the future of the U.S.-ROK alliance and residual American forces when Korea is no longer divided. It is, indeed, difficult to accept at face value that Beijing has grown tolerant of the presence of American forces on the Korean Peninsula, as many Chinese specialists assert. Could it be true now, and might it remain the case, that Chinese leaders have broadly accepted the stabilizing value of American military forces in both Korea and Japan, and

especially in Korea in recent years? If so, will the current Chinese concerns about what they see as a newly interventionist and hegemonic Washington erode or permanently reverse the trend toward tolerance for the U.S. military posture in Asia? Put another way, are we in the process of losing something valuable, or was it ever the case that Beijing was, until recently, at least content with the presence of U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula (and in Japan as well)? Given the doubts that exist among Westerners about the existence of some measure of tolerance in China for the U.S. alliances and American military presence in Asia, or even doubt that a debate on the issue is underway within China, it may be helpful to look closely at the fresh outlook and forthright but informed words on the subject of a young, yet widely respected and prestigious, Chinese specialist, Wu Xinbo:

China's perceptions of the targets, internal structures, and functions of the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korean alliances have changed remarkably over time, from extreme hostility to high tolerance. These changes resulted from the interactions of such factors as China's assessment of the world balance of power, the well-being of its relationship with both indigenous and outside powers, and the priority of its national policy. The evolution of Chinese perceptions also illustrates that China need not view the two security alliances as inherently hostile to its interests. Under some circumstances they can be considered useful or at least harmless. Beijing's attitudes are often determined not by the two alliances per se but rather by its perception of the sources of threat to its security and whether these security alliances can alleviate or aggravate the threat. On the other hand, given the nature of China's foreign policy, Beijing does not have intrinsic love for these alliances. Since the 1980s, China has not particularly endorsed any bilateral or multilateral military alliance in the region. Normatively China is also uneasy with the reality of the American military presence in the region and tends to see it as a short-term arrangement rather than a long-term phenomenon. During the Cold War, the Chinese perceived the two security alliances as either against China or with China. In the post-Cold War period, they have yet to be convinced that the function of the two alliances could be neither.<sup>77</sup>

*The Chinese Hard-liner's Dream and the American Nightmare.* It would appear then that, as with the reunification issue, an internal debate is in progress over the issue of American forces in Asia; the question might then be what is the nature and urgency of the debate and at what level is it being conducted. Beijing fully appreciates that there is certainly no reasonable prospect that Washington would withdraw its military forces under present circumstances. Most countries of the region continue to urge Washington to maintain its force levels, or at least capabilities, for the time being. Asian countries other than China are, indeed, often more supportive (or demanding) of Washington's sustaining its current troop numbers than some American military officers and officials would like. Beijing has largely come to accept that fact, if for no other reason than that it cannot see how to change it. However, major change on the Korean Peninsula (somehow eliminating the North Korean threat) is often seen as the catalyst for change in American forces in Asia, and certainly many in Beijing recognize that prospect. It is appropriate then, in this context, to try to comprehend the outlines and various sides of the Chinese internal debate.

*The Simple Solution: Americans Out!* Hard-liners in China, especially if the Taiwan problem remains unresolved, could optimistically (from their perspective) envision an "easy" solution. Absent a North Korea, or at least a North Korean threat, there would remain no rationale for American forces to remain in Korea. The Korean people, especially young Koreans already unfavorably disposed toward American forces there, would expect the Americans to leave or even agitate for an expeditious U.S. departure. The American people and the U.S. Congress would no longer desire to support and fund tens of thousands of troops and the large American military infrastructure in South Korea, especially if they were clearly unwanted by unappreciative Koreans. Beijing could, in this new situation, (without significant peril to the important bilateral relationship) effectively influence both



a Seoul that it has worked hard at winning over since at least the beginning of the 1990s and North Korean leaders (whatever role they may be playing) it has supported for decades, urging both to eject the United States. Any American arguments offered for a new form of American force structure in Korea tailored for responding to unpredictable (and admittedly hard to define) security contingencies likely to arise in the region would, in this negative environment, sound rather hollow.

As the Americans would then, of necessity, prepare to leave Korea, China quietly could aid in the movement almost certain to arise in Japan against U.S. forces and bases. This movement would be built on objections (and domestic political fears) concerning Japan's rather embarrassing role as the last country in Asia to provide bases and other support for U.S. military forces. Sooner or later, according to this hard-line Chinese scenario, Japan would cease being the sole host in Asia for American troops, aircraft, ships, bases, training areas, and huge quantities of military equipment and supplies. The JSDF, it would be noted especially in China, would cease to benefit directly from the complementary effects of American presence and cooperation; resurgent Japanese militarism would be curbed by severing it from American military support. Beijing's concerns would be eased about the arms and technology transfers that China objects to now and fears will lead to the continued inexorable buildup of a Japanese military to be feared in Asia.

China would, in the eyes of some, work to "Finlandize" this Japan, a Japan they hope would look around and see that accommodating a benevolent and prosperous, increasingly modern, and non-expansionist China would serve its purposes best. There is the hope or expectation that the unified Korea would be leaning even more toward China. For the Chinese who think in this way, or something that approximates this scenario of an essentially forced American withdrawal from Asia, there is icing on the cake: If the Taiwan situation remains unresolved to this time,

that would certainly not continue to be the case for long. Beijing would feel free to solve the Taiwan problem in the way it considers best with little fear of American interference in this Chinese internal affair; or at least that might be the view of Chinese hard-liners.

*A More Sober Chinese View of the Future of U.S. Forces.* The obverse of the internal Chinese argument, that we are not privy to hear directly, starts right off with serious questions about the outcome of an attempt at Korean unification. Might the enormous political and economic gaps between the two Koreas prove too great, with resultant widespread unrest or worse in a newly unified country? The strident and deeply divisive domestic regionalism that has been such a prominent feature of South Korean politics and elections would pale in comparison to the North-South differences that would divide a novel peninsula-wide polity striving to have democratic elections. For example, bloc voting by those in the former North Korea would almost certainly disrupt the pluralism so vital to South Korean democracy now. In this regard, then, might the next threat to regional security be a very unconventional one that we have not envisioned (possibly one reminiscent of the Balkans in the 1990s). Serious strife may arise as a consequence of a premature or misguided attempt to bring the two Koreas together. It is, after all, the Chinese, among others, who remind those from afar how difficult it might be to integrate North and South Korea.

Factions could arise in the former North Korea that would cause difficulties for Seoul on their own or by summoning help from abroad, both developments that would seem far less likely or troublesome with U.S. forces present. There is also the matter that is mentioned little but thought about a lot: the fear that Seoul may tend to act rashly or imprudently—something that an American presence may, even in today's world, have already controlled. Would not it be preferable for a large and calming U.S. presence to continue to moderate any hot-headed Korean tendencies to be rash or impatient in the

tense period as reunification tries to take root and grow? U.S. forces, and especially their senior leaders, even if not wholly desirable in Chinese eyes, are at least a known factor, and their steadfast presence might be an important element in giving Koreans confidence and adding to stability in a time of great uncertainty and extreme tension. Beijing may be happier to have Americans stuck with this rather sensitive and onerous task than a PLA wholly untrained in providing either peacemaking or peacekeeping assistance and not known or trusted by the economically and socially dominant majority of the population. So Chinese specialists might envision these demanding circumstances under which China's interests are well served by the enduring presence in significant numbers of U.S. military forces.

Of course, the crisis scenario might not be internal Korean unrest. Chinese security scholars who are favorably disposed to an American military presence, or at least think about it objectively, recognize that the contingency might be brought on by new problems in new places: in the very troubled Russian Far East, or involving a Philippine, Malaysian, or renewed Indonesian insurgency run amok and spilling into the sea lanes of the Philippine and South China Seas, or, simply put, the East Asian security contingency that we cannot now imagine but will wonder 20 years from now how we could have missed. And miss it we may (in a favorable sense), if U.S. forces in East Asia serve a preventive, stabilizing role based on their presence, without having to fire a shot or launch a missile. Yes, there are a few Chinese strategic thinkers who do understand that aspect of American presence in the region—as well as many who understand that argument but do not agree with the premises or conclusions.

*An Even More Moderate View: No Reason to Object to U.S. Forces.* Looking at the internal Chinese debate on a far less dramatic plane, Beijing's highest priority for the Korean Peninsula and the region, as we have seen, is stability—save for the Chinese obsession over Taiwan.

China has, according to many responsible sources, become quite pragmatic about the U.S. situation in Korea. U.S. forces in Korea are not directly threatening China. China has achieved a highly favorable position on the Korean Peninsula, including notably close and improving relations with the South, despite the large presence of American forces there; and the U.S.-ROK treaty is the centerpiece of security and stability in a place where China most values stability. To put it simply, American forces have been “part of the woodwork,” and some in Beijing have come to accept their presence as normal, nonthreatening, and, most important, stabilizing. Those who are pragmatic in Beijing, as opposed to anti-American hard-liners, are much more inclined to work with the existing security arrangements and be a responsible part of change—change accomplished in parallel with the new government of a unified Korea and with Washington, rather than acting obstreperously in trying to force prompt withdrawal of American forces.

In this argument, as in that of the hard-liners who argue for American withdrawal as well as for those who expect the United States to continue to play a strong role, there is the Japan factor. Put simply, there is a dark side to the all-too-plausible sequence whereby the departure of U.S. forces from Korea leads to ejection or unavoidable American withdrawal from Japan. Most of those who favor this softer line of argument are also likely to believe that it is far better to keep U.S. forces in Japan. These American forces are seen as a proven restraint; it is far better, from a Chinese perspective, to rely on that than to hope self-restraint and an unamended constitution (referring, of course, to Article 9, which precludes possession of war potential) will remain adequate bulwarks against resurgent Japanese militarism. This argument concludes that American forces should stay in Korea so that the matter of Japan’s politicians no longer finding the presence of U.S. forces tolerable has far lower probability of arising in the near future.<sup>78</sup>

So how might the more favorable views in China in support of continued U.S. presence on the Korean Peninsula

be bolstered by American actions? Presently, in the year 2000, it is the PLA that most strongly argues that the United States should now be viewed differently, that the United States and its military forces are no longer to be trusted and are increasingly tending to tip the scales toward regional instability. There is an optimistic possibility: If, as time passes, the United States is seen as no longer prone to frequent intervention and, for example, Kosovo may have made the Americans more wary rather than more willing to use force in such instances,<sup>79</sup> the more moderate side in Beijing will be able to make a more compelling argument. It is the newly formed conviction by hard-liners about a new face of American interventionist power that has eroded the Chinese tolerance and acceptance of U.S. forces in Korea, a tolerance that had grown out of years of the demonstrated nonthreatening nature of American military presence on the Asian mainland less than 300 kilometers from the Chinese border. It may not be quite as hard to return to that situation of Chinese tolerance as present circumstances make it seem, but that is hardly a sure bet.

The kicker in this for the longer term, however, is Taiwan (assuming an unresolved cross-strait situation at the time of reunification) and how U.S. forces in Asia are seen then with respect to Taiwan. It will simply no longer be possible to make a substantive case in Beijing about tolerance for the American presence in a unified Korea if residual U.S. forces there are seen unequivocally as means to intervene in a Taiwan crisis. Any disposition toward moderation and pragmatism by Chinese elements instantly loses its weight when Taiwan gets placed on the other side of the scale.

*The PRC's Treaty Obligations to the DPRK.* A Chinese specialist on China's security relations with North Korea said bluntly, "The treaty with North Korea is not a serious alliance in any sense of requiring the use of military forces; it is not a mutual defense treaty."<sup>80</sup> The mutual cooperation treaty, once seen by many as a commitment by China to come to North Korea's aid with military force, is essentially

a moribund instrument. Publicly, Beijing began clarifying the absence of obligations under the treaty at least 5 years ago. In 1995 and repeatedly thereafter, Beijing began making it increasingly clear it would not use the PLA in support of hostile action against South Korea by the Korean People's Army (KPA). Initially, the formulation ruled out support if Pyongyang initiated the action. Then it became clear that Beijing reserved the right to interpret the obligation (if it could still be called that) in any way Chinese leaders chose.

Pyongyang, for reasons that yet remain unclear, did not react noticeably to this snub. North Korea's leaders did not vociferously object when Beijing went so far as to deny the possibility of PLA support even if the *South* initiated the attack—as long as Seoul was acting alone, meaning, of course, absent American complicity.<sup>81</sup> Although this feature of the PRC-DPRK relationship has grown rather stale and apparently unworthy of notice by the public and news media, the *official public statements* made at the time should not be forgotten. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman announced in the latter part of 1995, "China does not believe the friendship treaty between Beijing and Pyongyang is a treaty requiring the dispatch of military forces."

In early 1997, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan (now the foreign minister), in South Korea on an official visit, said for public consumption that China was not willing automatically to intervene if North Korea were to start a war. Tang, continuing, said the PRC-DPRK treaty was a "dead document." In May 1997, Premier Li Peng in a public statement described North Korea as only a neighbor, not an ally. These stunning statements and the more stunning silence from Pyongyang in their wake might seem to signal a rupture in the relationship, especially since Beijing had previously set the relationship back significantly by establishing diplomatic relations with Seoul, still formally declared an enemy by Pyongyang, in 1992.

It is possible, of course, that Beijing would say one thing about its intent to use the PLA in Korea and mean another—or *do another* when the chips are down. However, as time has passed, it seems that Beijing may well have both meant what it said and also used those blunt statements specifically to deter bad behavior by Pyongyang. Those statements made it unequivocally clear that the chronically unpredictable and intransigent regime in Pyongyang would be committing suicide were it to undertake a military adventure. Of course, Beijing could be deterring Pyongyang, pleasing Seoul (and Washington, for those there who bothered to notice), and still ready to do what it wishes in a real crisis.

*The Search for Status.* These developments had the effect of bolstering the international reputation of a Chinese government that coveted status as a constructive member of the community of nations but had to overcome a well-earned international reputation for taking actions that have been very harmful to the country, its economy, and the Chinese people. Although the Chinese government is now once more, in 1999 and 2000, resorting to actions that most observers think imprudent (domestic crackdowns and very loud saber-rattling against Taiwan), Beijing has, nevertheless, continued to act soberly and maturely in its dealings with Pyongyang and Seoul. Beijing, not surprisingly, seems to have fully understood that North Korea's leaders would put regime survival above their flashes of anger and displays of frustration toward the South. Indeed, it is not hyperbole to suggest that Beijing has certainly made Pyongyang consider the unvarnished consequences of thinking that some desperate act might end up turning out well, with the PLA jumping in and helping greatly to produce the desired result. The Chinese decision openly to deny military support for Pyongyang may already have played a significant role in deterring a military adventure or other similar exploit by Pyongyang. In that regard, it must be remembered, North Korea's leaders have been more than testy on many occasions since China's stunning 1995

declarations (and subsequent repetitions) to the effect that reckless military actions would not bring the PLA's help or, put tersely, that Pyongyang had the ability to start a war but not to survive one.<sup>82</sup>

There is the possibility that Beijing has one more, comparatively moderate, motivation for the seeming affront to Pyongyang. Beijing not only wants to avoid war on its doorstep, but also Chinese leaders want to claim the moral high ground. This could go so far that, after an outbreak of hostilities, one might find China touting its solid efforts to avoid war and pointing the finger at Washington for having provided Pyongyang with a much bigger dose of pressure and provocation than of understanding and accommodation. Beijing wants to be perceived as restrained and measured in dealing with Pyongyang while Washington is made to appear unforgiving, hegemonic, and disinclined to appreciate the correctness of China's decision to understand the DPRK and its legitimate concerns rather than to condemn it at every turn.

Pyongyang's diplomatic outreach (beginning with the new century and Washington's double-barreled support for ROK President Kim Dae Jung's policy of opening to the North and adoption of the Perry Report) has dimmed to some extent the credibility of portraying Beijing as the only national capital that has in recent years cared about poor Pyongyang. Seoul and Washington are now jostling Beijing in the contest to see which can get closest to Pyongyang—and send the most money in the direction of the DPRK. Despite these latest efforts, Beijing is probably still poised, if something goes seriously wrong (big or small, sooner or later) on the Korean Peninsula, to condemn Washington for its belligerent attitudes toward China and Russia, and for provoking Pyongyang. In short, Beijing has positioned itself to do some name-calling and paint Washington as the culprit for whatever bad may have happened concerning North Korea. It is one thing for Beijing to be right about North Korea, but it is quite another to combine that with a convincing pronouncement that



Washington was wrong. That is what Beijing has positioned itself to do in the eventual battle for the hearts and minds of a unified Korean people looking for friends—one of these days.

*Chinese Intentions for Use of the PLA in a Korean Political or Economic Crisis.* Most Chinese are also convinced that Beijing would not order military intervention even if North Korea collapsed either politically or economically. Chinese specialists, however, do not give the scenario much thought, since most do not, as we have seen, believe the collapse of North Korea is a realistic concern. When pressed, Chinese interlocutors recite the reasons why China would avoid using the PLA or other forces in an intervention role in North Korea. China asserts it is not inclined to send forces into North Korea because:

- South Korea would react badly. Beijing values very much its economic and diplomatic relations with Seoul and exchanges views with the South Koreans even now on such a situation to help prevent some future crisis.

- There would be a similarly unfavorable American reaction, and Beijing's relations with Washington are close if not good, including important economic relations.<sup>83</sup> China simply could not prudently act unilaterally in doing something like this, even if it were tempted or felt compelled to do so; the international repercussions would be significant. China increasingly cares about its reputation as a responsible member of the community of nations and its vital trade and investment ties.

- China does not want to be bogged down in North Korea; it would be very difficult to find a way to pull out. "China got out once; the United States is still in South Korea," as one Chinese specialist put it.<sup>84</sup>

Recalling that China did send the PLA into Korea in the early 1950s, a very knowledgeable and well-connected researcher explained that the situation today is much different from the way it was 50 years ago. If trouble arose

between North and South, China would let the two Korean sides handle it, probably providing only food and medicine, he asserted. If the United States were to move across the DMZ (which he considers highly unlikely under any circumstances he can imagine), the reaction by Beijing and the PLA would be highly dependent on the status of U.S.-China relations. If the relationship were hostile and a threat to China appeared to be present, Beijing would have to act. If the relationship were as good as today (March 2000) or better, China would think hard before taking serious action, he asserted. He anticipates that Washington and Beijing would, under this circumstance, consult. The senior researcher added that he thinks it highly unlikely any faction or rump government in North Korea would ask the United States for help—adding to his conviction that an American crossing of the DMZ was not a plausible scenario for concern.<sup>85</sup>

Use of the PLA or PAP (People's Armed Police, now much larger than in 1989 and under PLA command but still responsible directly for internal security matters)<sup>86</sup> in Korea as part of a United Nations UN intervention force has been suggested by some Chinese specialists as at least a plausible consideration. Chinese willing to discuss this issue (but not be identified) are of several minds. They remind that China has not participated in any large-scale UN peacekeeping operations and would initiate such an action in Korea with great trepidation. Others point out that this method, through the device of the UN, would avoid the serious implications of unilateral intervention and might make it easier for Beijing to believe that Chinese forces could be extracted—that an indefinite commitment could be avoided. Interestingly, among those interviewed, the most cautious Chinese official was a PLA general officer who described the possibility of PLA participation in a UN force as "very sensitive" and re-emphasized the unprecedented nature of this for the PLA and how likely it was that such action would be interpreted as essentially a unilateral

Chinese intervention in Korea—regardless of what the facts might be.<sup>87</sup>

*Coping with Refugees.* There is the additional prospect, under increasingly dire conditions, of a persistent refugee flow in very large numbers northward into China. The same PLA general officer, who expressed such reticence about the PLA crossing the border and claimed to have been working on the issue, said unequivocally that the PLA and PAP were prepared to stop a refugee flow at or near the border with North Korea and to manage the refugees. He did not elaborate on how the refugees might be handled or seem to appreciate how large the numbers might be. It is pertinent that the PLA legitimately prides itself on being a *people's army* in the sense that it very frequently (many times a year) provides troops, often in very large numbers, to help cope with natural disasters in China such as widespread flooding, as mentioned earlier. PLA accomplishments in this area are undoubtedly presented in the best light in domestic (controlled) press reports, news photographs, and dramatic television coverage (sometimes a bit overdone for cynical Western eyes).

However, given the frequency and scope of PLA assistance of this sort, it is noteworthy that no instances of PLA inadequacy, bumbling, or mishandling of the humanitarian operations have come to light.<sup>88</sup> It can be said, at least, that the PLA is preparing to handle refugees and has both the experience and the resources to attack a moderate-scale problem successfully. The pertinent question is whether the problem would be so massive in a collapse of North Korea that any conceivable force would be overwhelmed.

*The Economy, Stupid!* Chinese scholars and practitioners who have analyzed the issue of Chinese reaction to chaos or political collapse emphasize what they see as China's real interests. They contend China will not foolishly deviate from the priority track of national economic progress; to accomplish that, a stable peripheral

environment is needed that surely does not include having the PLA in North Korea and having the South Koreans, Japanese, Americans, and others trying to find ways to punish China for the actions it took and applying all forms of pressure to force withdrawal of the PLA. Simultaneously, Beijing would likely be more worried about how to extract the PLA gracefully (or otherwise) rather than what advantages might be gained incident to an imprudent intervention. The head of a prestigious policy institute in Beijing added the somewhat emotional note that during the recent commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war in Korea, it was evident by the nature of the event and the remarks made how reluctant Beijing would be to use the PLA in a Korean intervention yet again.<sup>89</sup>

These are the Chinese arguments, repeatedly spoken in apparent sincerity—at least sincerity on the part of those speaking the words. Whether Beijing is believed or not on this count, it is significant that the great preponderance of Chinese discussion of this issue, privately and publicly, is about what China will not do with respect to intervention on the Korean Peninsula, rather than what it might do. This stands in remarkable contrast to Beijing's bluster about what it will do with respect to the use of force against Taiwan, illustrating that Chinese leaders are not reticent in using the threat of force as an instrument of policy—something it definitely is not doing in its policy for the Korean Peninsula. At a minimum, Beijing cannot reasonably be seen as poised to undertake bold intervention on the Korean Peninsula.

Another important message, generally unspoken but clearly implied in all these words by Chinese specialists, is that Beijing does not wish to see (or be a party to) an instance of foreign intervention in a sovereign country, especially a country neighboring China, because of the example it might give the world about what could come to pass in Taiwan, Tibet, or some other place China holds dear. The fear of renewed foreign intervention in China, and all that Beijing considers to be China, is deep and abiding.

Taiwan, especially of course, is rarely out of mind for the Chinese. As one Chinese interlocutor, praising prospects for the June 2000 Korean North-South summit, could not help but say, the success of this summit would imply that the Korean Peninsula is a less dangerous place from the American viewpoint. Consequently, Washington would be able to give more attention to the matter of the Taiwan Strait. That, he said ominously, increases the threat to China's security and well-being.<sup>90</sup>

### Policy Implications for Washington, Beijing and Other Capitals.

*China's Role in a Stable Future for the Korean Peninsula and the Region.* Major change of some sort is expected to come to the Korean Peninsula, although the timing and nature of the change remain quite uncertain. Few now would want to join the large club composed of those who have confidently made predictions about North Korea and been proven wrong. Nevertheless, it seems safe to suggest that the diminution or elimination of the threat posed by North Korea may be a major element of this impending and long-awaited change. The North Korean threat, by ground and missile forces especially, has at least since the end of the Cold War been proclaimed as the *raison d'être* of the U.S. alliances with the ROK and Japan and the reason for the intense interest in development and deployment of theater and national missile defenses (TMD and NMD). Consequently, this change on the Korean Peninsula is seen by many, including thoughtful Chinese strategists, as a catalyst for change in the security architecture of Northeast Asia, or possibly for all of East Asia.

Some might object to calling the existing loose collection of arrangements in the region a security architecture, but it is, in fact, a diverse structure of bilateral alliances, strategic partnerships (or prospects therefor), joint communiqués, national statutes, unique constitutional provisions, and the like. Nothing dictates that either the existing or an

envisioned security architecture have a rigorous or formal structure. Indeed, it has been argued often that, for this region, a formal structure resembling NATO is simply not suitable. Possibly the more interesting and more important questions are: (1) What can we say about the security environment in which this framework will function? (2) What do China and the United States expect or demand of a new or evolving security architecture?

In answer to the first question, it is simply too early to forecast what the security environment will be in the aftermath of some sort of change in Korea. New threats to peace and stability may take many forms, some that we understand now and some that we may have trouble imagining at present. It may be that curbing piracy or stopping drugs proves to be the major preoccupation, or it may be, as suggested earlier in this paper, that internal strife in a country like a unified Korea may require peacekeeping or peacemaking actions similar to those in the Balkans that gained such notoriety in recent years. More likely, the nature of the actual future threat or problem presently escapes our notice or exceeds our imaginations.

In light of this high degree of uncertainty, it would seem to most strategists foolhardy to take precipitous action such as terminating the U.S. bilateral alliances and withdrawing or sharply reducing the capability of U.S. force levels in the region—although changes in the missions, numbers, composition, and disposition seem likely. Furthermore, it would seem imprudent unnecessarily to take significant actions that may become essentially irrevocable. For example, because of various American domestic factors as well as regional ones, the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Asia may be an action that would be almost impossible to reverse once taken. No responsible government wants to see a dangerous power vacuum in the region or a rush to fill such a void, should it occur. Even for the most adamant America bashers, the United States is the “devil they know” in the Northeast Asia security lash-up, and there are adequate constraints on American action to satisfy most

(but hardly all) of the concerns of those who do not trust Washington to act with restraint.

In answer to the question about what China wants of the framework, it is evident, of course, that Beijing's concept of a future security architecture would not include as prominent features U.S. security alliances, and may well favor their dissolution. Although Beijing has not been in a hurry for the American alliances to end, there is the long-term view held by many in China that Asian security problems should eventually be the exclusive domain of Asian countries—that the oft-stated Chinese preference for no troops on foreign soil is more than a self-serving slogan. The central issue, however, is that China wants its role as an emerging major regional nation fully recognized.

Beijing rails against what it calls American attempts at hegemony, and Washington does not want China to assume a dominant posture. Nonetheless, fear of hegemony, by any party, must not obscure the fact that China is the largest and most populous country of the region and that it has legitimate aspirations for a constructive role in the security affairs of the region. This conviction on the part of Beijing is an underlying element of the strategic partnership concept that China has announced with Russia and advocated as the way of the future. China does not want to see itself as the apparent, if unnamed, adversary of alliances in the region and understandably wants instead to be a part of the architecture.

As to American requirements for a security framework, Washington firmly holds that its traditional bilateral alliances should be central features of any new security architecture. New importance, however, has been attached by some American strategic thinkers to what has been called a "growing pattern of security pluralism." This, of course, includes multilateral security dialogues, the most prominent of which is the ARF (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum). Many consider the ARF a talkfest at best and arguably a failure. Whether

that opinion is shared or not, it is useful, nevertheless, to mention the ARF in a Northeast Asian context, not because that body is attempting to tackle problems outside its region (Southeast Asia) but rather because the ARF is, in fact, already providing a venue where nations of Northeast Asia somewhat surprisingly meet and discuss security matters—such issues as confidence building and transparency, which might seldom if ever arise naturally and without direct confrontation in other meetings. This may demonstrate the applicability of such methods to Northeast Asia and is most recently illustrated by North Korea's joining the ARF session at its July 2000 session in Bangkok, where the North Korean foreign minister met with his counterparts including U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

There are other multilateral examples: The ROK, Japan, and the United States have established an official forum for discussion and cooperation. One of the most significant—if now somnolent—multilateral forums is the Four Party Talks involving the DPRK, ROK, PRC, and United States, something hard to imagine a few years ago. As the U.S. Department of Defense's 1998 East Asia Strategy Report states: "Multilateralism in all its forms will become an important element of U.S. engagement in the region in coming years." Only a short time back, neither Washington nor Beijing thought well of the concept of multilateralism. Americans thought multilateralism threatened its important bilateral arrangements. The Chinese considered multilateralism as a way for others to gang up on China. Now, anew, multilateralism is being referred to by some with disdain, as a concept that was a flash in the pan but now shows no promise. That may turn out to be the case, but for now there is no conclusive evidence of that, and, moreover, there has not arisen a replacement concept that holds promise. Until that occurs, sticking with multilateral efforts may be the only promising recourse.

At the end of the last decade, the American vision of security in Northeast Asia was a network of overlapping



and interlocking institutions and relationships that “establish a diverse and flexible framework for promoting common security in the Asia-Pacific region into the next century,” to quote the U.S. Department of Defense’s *East Asia Security Report (EASR)* once more. Beijing might ascribe to much of this as well. This is an exceedingly encouraging vision. For that reason, if no other, it seems premature to give up hope on multilateralism in one form or another or a conglomerate of forms as a plausible component of an evolving security architecture for Northeast Asia.

Whatever the ultimate solution (or absence thereof), a central problem is that there are two largely contradictory (possibly even diametrically opposed) views of the role of bilateral alliances in the regional security architecture. The broad concept of security pluralism, whether defined as multilateralism or not, seems to hold at least some promise of finding a middle ground, even if only temporarily. Consequently, the real issue at hand is not to choose one view over the other but rather to find a way to accommodate both views of the role of alliances and to make the most of the emergence of the idea of pluralism.

Among the first steps along such a path might be fostering the realization that alliances need not have identified adversaries as their *raison d’être* and that no country need be a target of these alliances unless its conduct makes it so. Put a bit more bluntly, it may be that China could find the concept of bilateral alliances far less distasteful if it did not inevitably have to conclude that the alliances target China. Some in the United States seem to want to identify China more clearly as an adversary rather than attempting to avoid such an appellation. There is more by far to the issue than semantics. It serves no useful purpose to state how unhappy we are with many Chinese policies and actions, and vice versa with Chinese unhappiness toward the United States, if we are not working positively to avoid an exacerbation of hostile attitudes.

It may be useful to present this concept another way, to turn it on its head: No country which desires to be an integral part of the security architecture can be seen as a looming threat to regional security and stability. This will require a good measure of introspection by all the countries that aspire to be solid components of a new framework. In this regard, there are several important questions that we should ask of ourselves. How does Washington explain what it sees as its role in a new or modified framework in such a way that even the detractors, the America bashers in China and elsewhere, know that the United States does not aspire to be a regional hegemon and a force bent on containment of legitimate national aspirations? Does Washington need to make it even clearer that it sees U.S. interests best served by stable, open, and prosperous nations in East Asia, unquestionably including China? How does Japan more effectively convince its neighbors, including both China (invaded and brutally occupied by Japan) and a unified Korea (brutally colonized by Japan for decades), that its goal is not a militaristic future and domination of the region?

What does China have to do to earn a place in the architecture? How might China cut the Gordian knot of the Taiwan issue? How does it deal with the firm convictions by others that Taiwan is *not* wholly an internal issue and that a peaceful resolution of the problem is the only way that makes sense? Can the developing confrontation between Chinese short-range ballistic missiles threatening Taiwan and theater missile defense be avoided? What are the ingredients that will make a unified Korea a welcome part of the framework? What are the appropriate places for Mongolia and Russia in the new architecture? To the extent that all are unwilling to address these questions with candor and a desire to understand the views of other capitals, the future security framework after Korean unification will be less strong and less stable.

The future, after Korean unification or some other form of change on the Korean Peninsula, will bring a new and

different security architecture for the region. Conceivably, this may occur quite abruptly; we may have the luxury of a gradual, evolutionary change; more likely we may have the frustrations and uncertainty of a sporadic process of steps forward, sideways, and backwards. This prospect of development of a new security architecture, at whatever pace it may take, has great promise and should be approached with optimism and enthusiasm. However, it is also a sobering, daunting task, fraught with peril; so it is appropriate to conclude with a list of reminders of the various *formulas that would likely result in failure* to construct a stable and effective new security framework for Northeast Asia.

We must avoid these formulas for failure of a new or evolving security architecture:

- Seeking formality and rigidity in composition and organizational structure—the fallacy of attempting to form something like NATO in Northeast Asia.
- Failing to appreciate China’s appropriate place in the architecture and ignoring Beijing’s views in shaping the concept.
- Prejudging the outcome on the Korean peninsula; i.e., assuming we can forecast the precise form of the resolution of the Korean problem.
- Waiting until after change on the Korean Peninsula to lay the groundwork—to consider seriously what will foster a stable and enduring framework.
- Acting hastily in reconsidering and readjusting American alliances and forward presence in Asia.
- Failing to find a way to blend the bilateral, the multilateral, and the “minilateral” mechanisms that all have roles to play.
- Assuming we can understand and foresee the nature of future security contingencies that will threaten the region.

This is admittedly a daunting task, especially when one recognizes that no one is in charge and that no one can be in charge. This has to be an international collegial effort. That heightens the challenge, but it also, one can hope, heightens the prospects that the new framework will sufficiently and appropriately reflect the composition and character of the region so that it will not be subjected to assaults from a country that feels it has been shunned or ignored. Hidden in the Chinese goals and strategies for the Korean Peninsula, there is great promise for major change, but that promise must be better understood before it can be realized. There is good reason to fear that a new framework will be doomed to instability if it is constantly being shaken by outsiders who are either trying to break into the structure or trying to dismantle it. China would be doing just that if we cannot use our understanding and analysis of China's attitudes toward the Korean Peninsula as a good and sufficient lesson to understand the larger matter of the structure and participants that can become the diverse, yet essential, components of a stable new regional security architecture.

None of this is to suggest that making the new security framework inclusive of all who should be part of the architecture will be an easy task. However, despite the extent of the difficulty, it will be easier to resolve these problems now (and to be ready to apply them as changes occur on the Korean Peninsula) than to try later to cope with the inevitable assaults on the framework by those who have been left out in the cold. The most challenging aspect of developing a new architecture, one largely and unavoidably derived from traditional security perspectives, may be to apply this architecture to a new world of nontraditional security concerns. But that challenge surely goes far beyond this examination of China's goals and strategies for the Korean Peninsula and what they imply for U.S. policy.

## CONCLUSION

China and the United States have entered the new century with a divided Korea composed of a crippled North and a newly economically recovered South. China anticipates, even relies on, the prospect that the Chinese economy will benefit significantly from trade and investment from South Korea. Washington expects that both China and South Korea will be its important economic partners. Neither Beijing nor Washington expects North Korea to move militarily against the South because both think North Korea's leaders have too much to lose and realize that such an action, absent the direct support of the PLA, would likely mean the devastation of North Korea and the fall of the Pyongyang regime. Beijing hopes that the magic of Korean unification or reconciliation may bring a new view, even in Washington, of a security framework for the region so that China will be able to become an integral component in the Northeast Asian security architecture, and that it will no longer, tacitly or expressly, be seen as a target of alliances.

Washington might hope that China, reflecting its positive role as a constructive member of the community of nations rather than its dark side as a bully ready to bludgeon Taiwan, would earn its position as a solid part of the regional security framework. If Washington and Beijing can reach such an accommodation, the now nettlesome issue of the continued presence of U.S. forces in the countries of Asia near China will not be a matter of consequence to China, or the forces will have been radically reconfigured or withdrawn because of other factors, domestic and international.

But no examination, in the year 2000, of China's interests in Korea should ignore the crazy Taiwan factor, as we have seen repeatedly. Taiwan is simply an integral part of China's regional security perspectives because Beijing has refused to rid itself of the obsession with Taiwan, or Taiwan has refused to accede to Beijing's generous but

unrelenting demands—whichever way one chooses to frame the matter. With the Taiwan issue unresolved, and, worse yet, volatile, China will not view U.S. forces and alliances in Asia as innocuous. Moreover, the threat the PLA poses to Taiwan will inevitably (and correctly) be considered by other countries as good and sufficient reason for the United States to maintain a strong, ready military capability in the region and for China to be the unspoken ultimate reason for the potent American presence.

If and when the cross-strait issue is resolved satisfactorily there will undoubtedly be other problems involving China and the United States. However, for the time being, the “Taiwan problem,” as Beijing calls it, is recognized clearly by all except the Chinese as the real obstacle to China’s aspiration to be viewed as a positive force in the region. Moreover, China, by its own actions, ensures that, in the current situation, the Taiwan issue remains a major complicating factor in devising a new security architecture for the region, even when the issue seemed to be China’s goals and strategies for the Korean Peninsula.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 5

1. North Korean leader Kim Jong Il made a surprise (kept secret until his return home) first foreign visit as his country’s leader to Beijing for 3 days in late May and early June 2000. South Korean President Kim Dae Jung made an announced, but unprecedented, visit to Pyongyang during the period of the conference for which this chapter was prepared. The North-South summit meeting, delayed a day for “technical reasons,” was actually held June 13-15, 2000, in the North Korean capital. It has left both sides with high expectations.

2. Eric A. McVadon, “Chinese Military Strategy for the Korean Peninsula,” chapter 9, in James R. Lilley and David Shambaugh, eds., *China’s Military Faces the Future*, Washington, DC: M.E. Sharpe and American Enterprise Institute, 1999, p. 273. In this earlier piece on a related subject, the author elaborated the balanced relationships between the PRC and the DPRK and ROK, including concerns by Beijing that Washington would disrupt the delicate balance the Chinese had worked so long and hard to attain.

3. Yu Bin, "Containment by Stealth: Chinese Views of and Policies toward America's Alliances with Japan and Korea after the Cold War," Asia/Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, Institute for Strategic Studies, <http://aparc.stanford.edu/>, September 1999, p. 11.

4. Kim Jong Il's last known trip abroad was to China in 1983, well before his father's July 1994 death. South Korean press reports state that Chinese President Jiang Zemin would make a reciprocal visit to Pyongyang in 2000, possibly in October.

5. China, in the months before Kim's trip to Beijing, significantly increased efforts to discover North Koreans illegally in China and return them, an action that would please Pyongyang but not Seoul.

6. Reuters news service report from Beijing on September 8, 1998.

7. Beijing Xinhua, June 1, 2000, report, "More on Kim Jong Il Visits" in English.

8. February 11, 2000, interview by the author with an experienced PRC practitioner who until recently participated for 4 years in activities that support China's foreign policy development and implementation for the Koreans.

9. Yu Bin, p. 11.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Xinhua, June 1, 2000.

12. Dinner conversation on March 24, 2000, by the author in Beijing in mid-March with the president of one of China's most authoritative policy analysis organizations. Although citation by name is imprudent in situations like this, Chinese specialists on relations with the Koreans are quite receptive to discussing China's strategy and actions with respect to the Korean Peninsula, even enthusiastic at the opportunity to try to ensure that Beijing's positions and the facts, as they see them, are presented.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Jonathan D. Pollack and Chung Ming Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification: Scenarios & Implications*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999, p. 15, including footnote 20. Pollack and Lee mention the crackdown by Chinese security forces, criminal activities by refugees, and that estimates of North Koreans living in northeastern China are as high as 100,000, with larger numbers during surges in search of food. Elizabeth

Rosenthal, in a May 31, 2000, article in the *New York Times*, "Beijing Steps Up Effort To Expel Illegal North Korean Immigrants," describes the pre-visit crackdown and also writes that the estimated numbers of illegal residents are 100,000 to 200,000.

15. Yang Xiyu, acting director of the Institute of World Development Research Center of the PRC State Council, interview by author, Beijing, March 19, 2000. The subject of PLA preparations for coping with a refugee flow is covered more extensively in Section 2 of this chapter. As noted there, the specific course of the information concerning PLA plans to block a refugee flow was an August 1997 interview by the author with a PLA general officer who had recently been involved with matters concerning planning for Korean contingencies in senior headquarters in Beijing.

16. February 11, 2000, interview cited above.

17. David Hoffman, "Russia Says N. Korea Offers to End Missile Program," *Washington Post*, July 20, 2000, p. A16.

18. "Russian and Chinese leaders talk by phone," *Reuters*, Moscow, July 26, 2000.

19. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov announced the visit on July 26, 2000, as reported by Elizabeth Piper in an article entitled "N. Korea's Kim to make mammoth Russian trip-Ivanov," *Reuters*, Moscow, July 26, 2000.

20. Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., *A History of Ballistic Missile Development in the DPRK*, Occasional Paper No. 2, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California, pp. 3, 8.

21. Marshal O was Minister of the People's Armed Forces and Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission as described in Defense Intelligence Agency publication PC-1510-101-96, *North Korea: The Foundations for Military Strength—Update 1995*, Washington, DC: 1996, p. 3.

22. Kim Taeho, "Strategic Relations Between Beijing and Pyongyang: Growing Strains amid Lingering Ties," in James R. Lilley and David Shambaugh, eds., *China's Military Faces the Future*, Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1999, p. 305.

23. *Ibid.* Kim cites *Dong-A Ilbo* (Seoul), July 11, 1997, p. 6, as the original source for these quoted words.



24. Making Kim Jong Il's unannounced May-June 2000 visit to Beijing all the more noteworthy.

25. Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1999, p. 67. The patterns of visits and names and titles of visitors before and after Kim Il Sung's death are provided in this section on PLA-KPA relations in the Stimson Center report.

26. Conversation on August 4, 1997, by the author with a senior PLAN officer with knowledge of his navy's exchanges with other navies as well as general knowledge of those of the other services of the PLA.

27. PRC foreign service officer responsible for DPRK affairs, conversation by author, July 1996.

28. Conversation cited above by the author with a senior PLAN officer, August 4, 1997.

29. Many of the PLA's weapon systems and related items would be well suited to both the KPA's budget and operational requirements, yet they are not transferred. The KPA has to scrounge elsewhere.

30. Eric A. McVadon, "The Chinese Military and the Peripheral States in the 21st Century: A Security *Tour d'Horizon*," chapter 2, in Larry M. Wortzel, ed., *The Chinese Armed Forces in the 21st Century*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 1999, pp. 49-50. The Chinese-asserted view of the Koreans in economic rather than military terms is described in full.

31. Chung Jae Ho, in his February 1999 paper "The Korean-American Alliance and the 'Rise of China': A Preliminary Assessment of Perceptual Changes and Strategic Choices," Asia/Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, Institute for International Studies, <http://aparc.stanford.edu/>, p. 8, states:

Since Korean-Chinese economic changes began in the late 1970s, the size of the bilateral trade has increased 1,249 times in eighteen years from \$US19 million in 1979 to \$US23.7 billion in 1997. The pace at which the Korean-Chinese trade has expanded is extraordinary since it took 32 years (1955-87) for the Korean-United States trade to reach a comparable level. That much of the expansion had already occurred prior to the 1992 diplomatic normalization further highlights the special nature of the bilateral relationship. By 1997, Korea and China became the third largest partner for each other

after the United States and Japan. Additionally, Koreans seem to regard Korea's trade with China as much more fair than Korea's trade with the United States.

32. For comparison, according to The Heritage Foundation's U.S. and Asia Statistical Handbook, 1999-2000 Edition, U.S. foreign direct investment in China reached \$2.6 billion in 1994 and in 1996 totaled \$3.8 billion, suggesting that South Korean and U.S. FDI in China are of the same order of magnitude.

33. Chu Shulong, "How the Korean-U.S. Security Alliance Is Viewed by the Chinese," conference paper, 14th annual Joint International Conference of the Council on U.S. Korean Security Studies and The Korean Association of International Studies held in Arlington, Virginia, October 1999, p. 8; and an interview by the author with Professor Chu in Beijing in March 2000.

34. Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, p.66.

35. Professor Chu Shulong, director of the North American Division of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations in Beijing, interview by the author, March 2000.

36. These survey results are extracted from Chung Jae Ho, "The Korean-American Alliance and the 'Rise of China': A Preliminary Assessment of Perceptual Changes and Strategic Choices," February 1999, Tables 6, 7, and 8 on p. 13. See earlier citation for further information on accessing the paper.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

38. An associate research professor who deals with China's security relations with North Korea at a prestigious think tank closely linked to the PRC government, conversation by the author, Beijing, March 24, 2000.

39. Senior member of a prestigious think tank who has written extensively on Chinese security interests on the Korean Peninsula, interview by author, Beijing, March 2000.

40. Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., p. 29. Bermudez supports the Chinese specialist's point: "DPRK missile designers and engineers have continued to travel to the PRC for professional training and possible technology exchanges throughout the 1990s."

41. Visiting Chinese scholar-official who has excellent knowledge of and extensive experience with Beijing's relationship with Pyongyang, interview by author, Washington, DC, February 11, 2000.

42. If one takes seriously the statements about reluctance to address the missile issue with Pyongyang, it is intriguing that Chinese leaders feel quite free to criticize Washington and others; e.g., telling Taipei it cannot acquire TMD and rebuking an insufficiently repentant (about World War II) Tokyo to the effect that duplicitous Japan will probably use TMD to gain ballistic missile technology with which to threaten China or that it will use TMD as a shield behind which it will develop nuclear weapons and once again be the scourge of Asia. Nonetheless, it appears that these "insider" interlocutors firmly believe that Beijing is constrained in this way in its conversations with North Korean leaders.

43. As with Beijing's alleged constrained and cautious conversations with Pyongyang, it is intriguing to hear these well-connected interlocutors argue that huge China would insist on having proof or concrete evidence before it would feel comfortable confronting its troubled, comparatively tiny neighbor of North Korea when it can so readily confront or insult others on what often appear to be dubious grounds or contrived conclusions. The intrigue is compounded by the careful crafting of the Chinese positions to incorporate American sacred cows such as the MTCR and by the assertion that the disorderly U.S. arrays of positions are inconsistent or illogical as contrasted with Beijing's unified and unassailable "principled positions." There is more than intrigue to this, of course; Beijing's points on these matters are the result of developing a single, official view and honing it by repeated rehearsals. Free-lancing is not part of the process, even in Track II forums, and, consequently, getting through the formally forged Chinese boilerplate is often a truly formidable task for Western interlocutors.

44. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., pp. 10 and 29, supports the Chinese assertion. Bermudez establishes a link between early DPRK ballistic missiles and Soviet R-17E [Scud B] missiles obtained about 1980 by North Korea from Egypt and reverse-engineered, but with respect to the *Taepo-dong* 1 and 2 he writes:

There have been frequent reports suggesting a linkage between both systems—especially the *Taep'o-dong* 2—and PRC missiles (i.e., DF-3). These claims, however, remain to be confirmed.

45. The lack of advance notice by Pyongyang to Beijing of the August 1998 *Taepo-dong* launch was corroborated by reference to a statement

by Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao as reported by *Reuters* in Beijing on September 8, 1998. As mentioned previously, Beijing was also surprised recently by Pyongyang's alleged offer to Russian President Putin to abandon rocketry in return for foreign aid to its space exploration program, interpreted by some as North Korean use of international space launch services.

46. DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun at the July 2000 ASEAN Regional Forum session in Ban would not elaborate on Putin's report of a North Korean willingness to give up its ballistic missile program, leaving the issue quite unclear.

47. Chinese security specialist working in Washington, interview by author, April 21, 2000.

48. KEDO is responsible for procuring and delivering heavy fuel oil to North Korea to fuel electrical power plants that otherwise would be powered by the objectionable nuclear reactors prohibited by the provisions of the Agreed Framework. The agreed arrangement is that light water reactors, which are not ready sources of weapons-grade fissionable material, will eventually supply the electrical power that the now shutdown "dirty" reactors would have provided along with plutonium that could readily be used in weapons.

49. This is the carefully constructed, and representative, argument of a specialist on Sino-Korean relations at a prominent Beijing institution for the study of international relations. It will be of interest to see how Beijing reacts to the July 2000 mention by President Putin that Russia may become a contributor to KEDO funding.

50. A very senior and self-confident official of the international relations institution above offered this candid elaboration of the reasoning behind Beijing's decision not to contribute to KEDO funding. The remarkable Chinese theme of grave concern about Pyongyang's sensibilities appears again in this argument.

51. Chu Shulong, "China and the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea Alliances in a Changing Northeast Asia," Asia/Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, Institute for Strategic Studies, <http://aparc.stanford.edu/>, June 1999; and "China and the U.S.-Korean Alliance," conference paper, *14th Annual Conference of The Council on U.S. Korean Security Studies and The Korean Association of International Studies*, Arlington, VA, October 28-29, 1999. Because Professor Chu could not attend the conference in Arlington, the author, coincidentally, presented and discussed the latter paper and has

retained a copy, as did The Council, whose address is P.O. Box 3651, Arlington, VA 22203; fax, (703) 979-0909.

52. February 11, 2000, interview previously cited.

53. It was intriguing to hear this thoughtful official and scholar go through his chain of logic, which allowed him to argue that the American desire to retain troops in Asia (for reasons he did not describe) is so strong that it leads Washington to strive to have North Korea remain intact indefinitely.

54. Chinese security specialist working in Washington, interview by author, April 21, 2000. It might be more accurate to say that China would be unwilling and would find it domestically imprudent to pour money down the economic black hole that North Korea has become.

55. The spring 2000 visit by Kim Jong Il to Beijing was seen as an affirmation of relations between China and North Korea after the death of Kim Il Sung and is expected to make both sides more confident so that Pyongyang will not be so inclined to act in desperation, feeling there is no alternative. During Kim Il Sung's time, these exchanges were frequent. Professor Chu Shulong said that, despite rumors to the contrary, there are good solid relations with North Korea and Kim Jong Il's leadership is accepted by the Chinese. China must deal with Kim. He must be strong to have come out of that system and survived so far. Moreover, Kim Jong Il has been reasonable to deal with, Chu asserted, speaking with authority.

56. February 11, 2000, interview cited above.

57. Yu Bin, p. 10.

58. Dinner conversation by the author on March 19, 2000, in Beijing with an official who was very familiar with the government policies with respect to the Korean Peninsula and works under the State Council, the Chinese equivalent of the cabinet of the U.S. president.

59. March 20, 2000, interview cited previously.

60. It is somewhat annoying to Chinese specialists to be continually confronted by disbelief on the part of Americans, many of whom exude an air of confidentiality in saying that they understand the true positions of all the major countries on the matter of reunification. They go on to suggest quietly that Japan, the United States, and China, although it cannot be said publicly, know that continued division of the Korean Peninsula is the preference for those insiders who think carefully about a possible realistic solution.

61. Although this history is well known to those who lived through these years and played a role in the events described, for those interested, this summary was derived from a much longer description of the history of Chinese attitudes toward U.S. forces in Korea that appears at the beginning of Chu Shulong's paper "How the Korean-U.S. Security Alliance Is Viewed by the Chinese," conference paper, *14th annual Joint International Conference of the Council on U.S. Korean Security Studies and The Korean Association of International Studies*, Arlington, VA, October 1999, pp. 1-2. In an earlier citation of Chu's paper, methods to obtain a copy are suggested.

62. The term *normal*, spoken in English with something of a sneer, is used commonly by many Chinese specialists to reflect Chinese distaste for the possibility that Japan could be allowed to reacquire the status of a *normal state*.

63. February 11, 2000, interview cited above. There are many thoughtful Chinese who simply do not imagine the China they think they know involved in competition with the very advanced U.S. economy and similarly advanced U.S. military for the dominant role in the region. When reminded that some of their more militaristic (and possibly influential) countrymen do make such noises, they point out that among so many people there are bound to be outlying views—just as in the United States. They call to mind that prestigious Americans, some who are quite influential, essentially declare China an enemy, even now, over matters that virtually all Chinese consider absurd: Taiwan self-determination, the status of Tibet, China's sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, human rights they wish to define in Western terms, sales of weapons allowed by international practice (and hardly comparable in size and technology to American sales), and the spotty, halting modernization of one of the world's most backward large military organizations, the PLA. [It is interesting to hear moderate Chinese interlocutors essentially equate the immoderate views of vociferous advocates in the two countries.]

64. Chung Jae Ho, p. 14. Chung writes:

Despite the relatively declining popularity of the United States among Koreans, the public attitudes toward the necessity of the stationing of the U.S. forces have gradually become more positive. . . . While 74.5 percent of the respondents in the 1988 . . . survey preferred the withdrawal of the United States forces sooner or later, the comparable figure gradually but seemingly irreversibly dropped to 60.2 percent in 1990, 51.5 percent in 1995, and 37.4 percent in 1997. Whether the decline reflects the heightened security concerns generated by the North Korean

nuclear crisis in the first half of the 1990s remains uncertain. It may be speculated that the Korean attitudes toward the United States may have become more "pragmatic" in that the Koreans might have begun to differentiate perceptual dispositions from their practical needs.

Table 9 of Chung's paper, immediately following the quoted text, provides a breakout of data from surveys taken in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1997 from which the figures cited above are derived.

65. For a more complete treatment of this subject, see Eric A. McVadon, "Chinese Military Strategy for the Korean Peninsula," chapter 9, in James R. Lilley and David Shambaugh, eds., *China's Military Faces the Future*, Washington, DC: M.E. Sharpe and American Enterprise Institute, 1999, pp. 289-291, and endnote 5 on p. 292.

66. March 19, 2000, interview with Yang Xiyu.

67. Chu Shulong, "China and the U.S.-Japan and U.S. Korea Alliances in a Changing Northeast Asia," p.16.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

69. March 19, 2000, interview cited previously.

70. The author and others were "lectured" along these lines in the summer of 1999 by a distinguished PLA general officer at the National Defense University in Beijing. His theme was that the United States is wrongheaded to proceed down the road of even greater capability to conduct interventions into sovereign countries as was the case with the "U.S.-led attacks on Yugoslavia."

71. April 21, 2000, interview cited previously.

72. James Clay Moltz, "Viewpoint: Missile Proliferation in East Asia: Arms Control vs. TMD Responses," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Spring-Summer 1997.

73. Chinese strategists see the TSEA (the passage of which is currently in considerable doubt) as the means to reestablish essentially a U.S.-Taiwan defense treaty, as existed before the United States recognized the PRC, and certainly as a way to develop coordination and cooperation between the armed forces of Taiwan and those of the United States on critical matters like early warning of missile attacks. These PRC defense specialists do not blink an eye in very righteously decrying

a system, the purpose of which would be to defend Taiwan against ballistic missiles launched from across the Taiwan Strait.

74. Senior member of a prestigious think tank who has written extensively on Chinese security interests on the Korean Peninsula, interview by author, Beijing, March 20, 2000.

75. The author has repeatedly over several years drawn knowledgeable Chinese interlocutors into such "traps" and has never been confronted by an answer that foresees North Korea's no longer existing as a separate state. In other words, for whatever reason, there seems to be no vision of, and certainly no preparation for, dealing with a unified Korea among those to whom the author has spoken.

76. Jonathan D. Pollack and Chung Ming Lee, pp. 14-15. As Pollack and Lee state it,

Given that China's links to both Koreas (despite an increasing policy "tilt" in favor of the ROK) afford it substantial leverage in relation to future outcomes on the peninsula, there is still ample uncertainty and evident internal debate over its preferred strategy under more stressful circumstances.

77. Wang Jiangwei and Wu Xinbo, "Against Us or with Us? The Chinese Perspective of America's Alliances with Japan and Korea," Stanford University, Asia/Pacific Research Center, Institute for Strategic Studies, <http://aparc.stanford.edu/>, p. 5. Dr. Wu Xinbo is a prominent professor at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai; he is currently (summer of 2000) a visiting fellow at the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

78. Many Chinese, probably by far most of those who contemplate strategic issues, seem truly concerned about the Japanese threat. They are often torn between belief in the vociferous Chinese complaints on the one hand about the Revised Defense Guidelines and America's helping to make the JSDF imprudently stronger and on the other hand the proven value of the 47,000 American military personnel based in Japan.

79. Alternatively, Beijing may come to realize that Washington did not rush to intervene in Kosovo but rather did so when all else failed and something had to be done. However, even the most moderate and thoughtful Chinese security scholars are not currently prone to accept that interpretation, and those who might would likely get shouted down with reminders of the attack on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.



Chinese diplomats, for example, guffaw at the suggestion by Europeans that the United States, if anything, was too slow in deciding to act in Kosovo and against Yugoslavia. They call the Europeans who say so American lackeys and seem to mean it.

80. Associate research professor who deals with China's security relations with North Korea at a prestigious think tank closely linked to the PRC government, conversation by author, March 20, 2000.

81. Admittedly, it is difficult to conceive of a reasonable scenario wherein South Korea would act alone (without American forces) and attack North Korea, so this statement, it can be argued, had reduced practical application. Not to be overlooked, however, is that Beijing, rather gratuitously, added this stipulation to the statement that PLA support would not be forthcoming if the North initiated an attack. In other words, Beijing went out of its way to make another dramatic public pronouncement denying PLA support to Pyongyang and thereby making it all the more clear to all that the PLA does not stand behind the KPA.

82. A Chinese diplomat in Washington used this expression, or something very similar, during a July 1997 private conversation with the author on China's attitude toward North Korea.

83. These Chinese expressions of concern about Washington's sensibilities on the matter were a bit unexpected!

84. Chinese security specialist working in Washington, interview by author, April 21, 2000.

85. March 20, 2000, interview by the author.

86. The PAP, after their dismal performance around Tiananmen in 1989 (as viewed from the perspective of China's leaders), were made a part of the PLA; the PAP units are responsible for diverse internal security matters throughout the country.

87. PLA general officer who had recently been involved in matters concerning Korean contingencies in a senior headquarters in Beijing, interview by author, August 1997.

88. It is possible that the government and the Communist Party press have protected the PLA from criticism of this sort, but such protection has certainly no longer in recent years been extended to many, including even senior PLA officers, accused (and generally found guilty) of somewhat similar misdeeds or malfeasance (graft, bribes,

scandal, misuse of funds, use of below-standard construction materials, etc.) that have harmed Chinese citizens.

89. March 24, 2000, dinner conversation.

90. April 21, 2000, interview.

## CHAPTER 6

### CHINA'S GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE KOREAN PENINSULA: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Larry M. Wortzel

Like the communist regime in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the communist regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has one fixed, principal goal in mind—the survival of a one-party state led by a communist party. Thus, in both countries, even regime legitimacy is sacrificed at the altar of its survival.

Given this primary goal, it is no surprise that between the beginning of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the collectivization of its agriculture and industry in 1953, Rudy Rummel estimates that over eight million Chinese citizens were starved, beaten, or murdered at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in CCP-organized tribunals or other entities.<sup>1</sup> Then, according to Rummel, between 1955 and 1967, during the period of collectivization and the "Great Leap Forward," another seven million or so Chinese were killed in the CCP's pursuit of its societal goals.<sup>2</sup> After that Great Leap Forward, agriculture and food production was in such shambles in China that another ten million people starved to death.<sup>3</sup> Through this, supported by a huge military that produced its own food supplies and a strong state security apparatus, the Communist Party of China survived. Therefore, I am extremely skeptical when senior Chinese army or government officials tell me that "things are a little difficult in the DPRK, but the people are tough and can endure hardship."<sup>4</sup>

When an official of China's Ministry of State Security opines that "he does not believe [that] any communist

country will collapse as a direct result of economic troubles," he or she is referring to the phenomena described above—where citizens are tools of the government, rather than the reverse.<sup>5</sup> It is for these reasons that the strategies of the PRC must be critically analyzed. The statements of Chinese officials must be taken as reflections of the broader communist party "line" and compared to the demonstrated actions of China. Moreover, if past actions are any indication of future behavior, without a regime change in North Korea<sup>6</sup> short-term changes in policy must be assessed with skepticism and not accepted as representing fundamental changes in the goals of the Kim regime.

Less than a year ago, in discussing the development of long-range ballistic missiles capable of hitting the United States, North Korea's Central News Agency claimed that

the U.S. should see . . . [North Korea's] war capacity and the changed situation. There is no guarantee of safety of the U.S. mainland.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, even when North Korea seemed on the verge of economic collapse, Chinese officials routinely told visiting American academic and military groups that "China will not let North Korea collapse."<sup>8</sup> The unqualified support given to the DPRK by China, therefore, flies in the face of statements that the proliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula is not in China's interest.<sup>9</sup>

It is important not to ignore facts in the pursuit of specific political objectives, even when those facts may indicate that American strategies are failing. Remember that in the fall of 1997, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said in an address at the University of Louisville that "North Korea's dangerous nuclear program has been frozen and will be dismantled." At the end of August 1998, however, North Korea fired a *Taepo-dong* missile into the sea between Japan and Russia.<sup>10</sup> Not long after that, suspicions arose that the North Koreans were working in

caves near Kumchang-ri to develop nuclear, chemical, or biological warheads to be mounted on the *Taepo-dong*.<sup>11</sup> The Kumchang-ri caves were believed to have served as an underground work complex for up to 15,000 workers.<sup>12</sup> With regard to a propensity to back away from real concerns to advance a specific policy agenda, a U.S. negotiator with North Korea, Charles Kartman, told the press that there is "compelling evidence" that the Kumchang-ri site is nuclear-related. Two days later, however, Mr. Kartman backed away from that statement, saying that "strong information made the United States *suspicious*" about the site. In April 1999, NHK Television in Seoul reported that North Korea was conducting propulsion tests for a *Taepo-dong 2* missile with a range of 3,750 miles.<sup>13</sup> Yet, China continues to tell the Americans sent out to prospect around Beijing for opinions that China does not support proliferation, or a hostile Korean Peninsula.<sup>14</sup>

The preponderance of evidence shows that China retains good contacts with North Korea; despite what may be Beijing's frustrations over a failure by Kim Jong Il to begin incentive systems in North Korean agriculture,<sup>15</sup> North Korea has:

- added military capability;
- improved its missile systems;
- obtained over \$645 million in aid from the United States while it provided no verifiable access to its nuclear or biological warfare sites;
- made no changes in its military posture along the demilitarized zone; and
- cemented its relations with Russia.

All of the foregoing occurred despite the fact that China does have influence with North Korea:

- In 1996 and 1997 China donated a total of about 200,000 tons of food to the DPRK.

- The Chinese donated more rice in August 1997.

- At the 70th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on August 1, 1997, the Chinese Defense Attaché to Pyongyang told the Director of the General Political Department (GPD) of the Korean People's Army (KPA) that the armies, the people, and the communist parties of China and the DPRK had close links sealed in blood.

- North Korean Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok (Nok), head of the GPD, responded by saying,

The people and armies of the two countries will remain intimate brothers and comrades in arms who help and support each other in the common struggle against imperialism and socialism.

- An official of the PRC's GPD, Zhou Kunren, visited Pyongyang again in November 1997.

- In 1998, China sent another 100,000 tons of rice and 20,000 tons of fertilizer.

- The PRC Xiantong Group modernized the Rajin-Namyang railway line and is making improvements that will increase rail volume "14 times."

- Scientific and technological and hydropower cooperation protocols were signed between the two countries in 1998.

- Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Department of the PLA, visited Pyongyang in August 1998, just before the *Taepo-dong* launch over Japan.

- China provided 80,000 tons of crude oil to the DPRK after the *Taepo-dong* launch, while Japan cut its assistance.

- On June 3-4, 1999, Jiang Zemin and Li Peng accepted delegations from North Korea. (Note dates.) China gave 150,000 tons of food and 400,000 tons of coke to DPRK (it could have done nothing, like Japan) which were delivered in February 2000.

- Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian and DPRK Vice Marshal Kim Il Chul met on June 21, 1999.

- Korean Vice Defense Minister Ryo Chun Sok met Chi Haotian at a reception on August 1, 1999, and explicitly linked the inviolate territorial integrity of Korea and that of China with Taiwan.

- Beijing continues to provide hydropower cooperation to North Korea.

- Kim Jong Il visited the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang in March 2000 as part of the Spring Festival visit, a sign of a certain amount of tributary homage to his benefactor.

The Kim Dae Jung Visit and the Albright Visit to Pyongyang.

Beijing's influence over the North is perhaps best illustrated by the way that Kim Jong Il visited China on the eve of his summit with South Korean President Kim Dae Jung. In my view, China pushed Kim Jong Il to moderate his positions on family reunification slightly and to soften his rhetoric, for two reasons. First, Beijing still depends on investment from South Korea that would stop in the event of a war between North and South. Second, Beijing can use the appearance of a more moderate North, with at least an orientation towards peace, as an argument to undermine the effort of the United States to move forward with national missile defense programs and to advocate theater missile defense programs for its allies and friends in Asia. Beijing intensely dislikes such programs because they undermine the PLA's ability to coerce China's neighbors, Taiwan, U.S. forces, and the United States with nuclear and missile blackmail.

Despite Pyongyang's failure to change its policy of harboring fugitive terrorists inside its borders (e.g., the Japanese Red Army bombers who took refuge in North Korea), a visit to New York by Vice Foreign Minister Kim

Kye-gwan to negotiate with the U.S. Government was followed by a rushed trip to Washington by Jo Myong Rok. A meeting with President William Clinton at which Jo wore his military uniform was the culmination of the visit, although Secretary Albright hosted a somewhat anticlimactic dinner at the State Department. President Clinton came close to agreeing to visit Pyongyang after this meeting in October 2000.

Secretary Albright was dispatched to Pyongyang on short notice after she announced that she was exploring a Clinton visit in November 2000, as the President left the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In Pyongyang, during the week of October 22-25, Albright was maneuvered into a visit with Jo in the same location as the shrine and statue of Kim Il Sung, and found herself at a celebration of the Korean Workers Party. In what proved to be a more embarrassing moment for the Secretary and the United States, Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian arrived in Pyongyang while Albright was still in town to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the entry of the Chinese People's Volunteers (the PLA) into North Korea during the Korean War. Albright was maneuvered by Beijing and Pyongyang to be in the city on the anniversary of the battles in which Chinese soldiers and their North Korean allies were mauling the U.S. 1st Marine Division, the 7th Infantry Division, and allied United Nations forces in the area around the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir. Chi Haotian noted this while Secretary Albright was still in Seoul conferring with the South Korean and Japanese foreign ministers. It would be difficult to find more concrete evidence of the way that Pyongyang and Beijing are coordinating on Korean Peninsula and U.S.-related matters.

## PRC Goals.

China has a clear set of goals in its actions on the Korean Peninsula: maintaining a peaceful periphery to facilitate foreign investment and the modernization of its arms and



combat forces; reducing the likelihood that missile defenses will be deployed in the region; creating a buffer from financial crises that might retard science and technology modernization; replacing American alliances with regional security dialogues; and creating a web of strategic partnerships as a means to place itself at the hub of inter-state diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region.

To demonstrate China's influence and power on the Korean Peninsula, one needs only to remember that at the mere suggestion that "relations with China would be difficult" the Clinton Administration refused to approve badly needed air and cruise missile defenses for Taiwan in 1999. When China suggested that "it would not be good for relations" in 1999, the Republic of Korea opted not to participate in research even on theater missile defenses in Asia with the United States. Looking beyond Korea, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional forum (ARF) was formed as a means to respond to China. Vietnam is seeking a new form of security relationship as a balance against China. And the Chinese military industry managed to supply Pakistan with a nuclear and ballistic missile capability.

North Korea's Short- and Long-Term Strategies and the U.S. Role.

There could be changes on the Korean Peninsula leading to reduced military tensions and some reform in the North. Although such changes are more symbolic than substantive to date, symbolic changes are important as a beginning. The dilemma for the people of Korea and the United States, as well as Japan, is to ensure security and stability in the region while encouraging substantive progress on a lasting peace and the end of the Cold War. If the Cold War was about fighting and containing communism then it really is nearly over. While communist systems are repressive and economically unsound, regime change in the North is not the primary goal of the United States and the allies.

Instead, the goal is to bring North Korea out of its isolation from international institutions and the international system of commerce and diplomacy.

From the time of the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) Agreement and the Agreed Framework, North Korea seemed to be operating on a short-term strategy aimed at regime survival. North Korea operated in the international and regional arena by a combination of threats involving missiles, weapons of mass destruction, and arms sales. It blackmailed the West, particularly the South, the United States, and Japan into supporting its fuel and food needs. Yet, it made no substantive changes in its economic system.

#### A Long-Term Strategy for Beijing and Pyongyang.

After Kim Il Sung's death in the summer of 1995, there did not seem to be a distinct change in the long-term strategy of regime survival and control, and the maintenance of a closed, communist system. The present long-term strategy in Pyongyang and Beijing appears to involve coming to some kind of accommodation with South Korea, Japan, and the United States that preserves North Korea as a separate entity and keeps the Korean Workers' Party in power.

In the economic realm, however, the North appears to realize that some kind of economic change is necessary. North Korea will opt for gradual and controlled reform, but it must resolve or at least seriously consider several critical issues to make progress. Pyongyang must address:

- The harboring of terrorists from the Japanese Red Army. They are still given sanctuary in the North.
- The missing people from South Korea and Japan believed to have been kidnapped by the North.
- The threatening military deployments by the North on the DMZ.

- Transparency of the North Korean missile, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs.
- The continuing arms sales by North Korea to other countries that seek to destabilize the international system.

Notwithstanding these problems, there are some positive results from the courageous initiative by President Kim Dae Jung: the Nobel peace prize, which is richly deserved; and the talks between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il, which are critical to ensuring high-level political direction to future contacts. Meanwhile, the strategy of the North appears to be gradually shifting. The North still seeks to maintain a robust military. The North still seeks to maintain control of the nation by the Korean Workers' Party. However, North Korea's economic strategy appears to be changing as it comes to realize that any economic development will require some opening to the outside world.

There are some 138 small and medium-size South Korean businesses operating in the North. Private volunteer organizations are active in the North, some involved in establishing "micro-economies" in agricultural production and marketing. South Korean conglomerates are participating in economic projects. Nonetheless, without substantive moves by North Korea to address the fundamental security issues, we cannot be sure that some of its recent moves are not tactical in nature designed to bring in money, food, and economic aid.

North Korea's attitude appears to be undergoing some change, which might be due in part to pressure from Beijing. Like China, the United States has a role in fostering that change. The United States cannot dismiss China's influence over Pyongyang, or be blind to areas where American and Chinese foreign policies may be at cross-purposes. The United States must work closely with the allies in the Trilateral Coordination Oversight Group (TCOG). The continued U.S. presence in and security commitment to Korea is the security architecture and umbrella for Northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S.

commitment has a stabilizing effect. Although reluctant to admit it, even security planners in Beijing acknowledge that the U.S. presence keeps historical tensions and animosities from resurfacing.

## Conclusion.

The United States has responsibilities to the region and interests of its own that make its presence important. Toward such ends, the United States will encourage the North to join international financial organizations and become a full, responsible member of the international community.

The bottom line for good U.S. policy: continue to trade with China; maintain a strong, forward-deployed American military in Korea; keep an active foreign policy in Asia; provide strong security backing for Kim Dae Jung; and keep its powder dry.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 6

1. R. J. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900*, London: Transaction Publishers, 1991, pp. 219-226.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-145; see also Richard L. Walker, *The Human Cost of Communism*, a Study of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 16.

3. Rummel, p. 251.

4. Comments by Chinese officials, July 1997, Beijing, China, and Washington, DC.

5. Quoted in Eric A. McVadon, "China's Goals and Strategies for the Korean Peninsula," a paper prepared for the workshop titled "Competitive Strategies: Planning for a Peaceful Korea," co-sponsored by the Non-Proliferation Education Center, The Hyatt Arlington, Arlington, VA, June 12-14, 2000, p. 20.

6. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK, and North Korea will be used interchangeably in this chapter to refer to the North;

the Republic of Korea, ROK, and South Korea will be used to refer to the South.

7. "What will war on the Korean Peninsula bring?" Korean Central News Agency, August 2, 1999, , quoted in Jack Spencer, *The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook*, Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, 2000, p. 49.

8. This author served in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, China, for two tours of duty, the latest of which was as Army Attaché between May 1988 and June 1990, and between July 1995 and December 1997. The phrase asserting that China would not allow North Korea to collapse was like a mantra, repeated to all visiting American delegations.

9. McVadon, p. 28.

10. "Korea's Provocation," *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, KY, September 1, 1998, p. A6.

11. Arnold Kramish, letter to the editor, "Great Expectations for North Korea," *The Washington Post*, December 6, 1998.

12. F.J. Khergamvala, "Pressure Mounts on North Korea," *The Hindu*, December 8, 1998, p. 1.

13. World In Brief, "U.S. Craft Head to Troubled Korean Waters," *The Washington Post*, June 17, 1999, p. A31.

14. McVadon, pp. 13-14.

15. Discussion with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, March 2000, .

## CHAPTER 7

### JAPAN'S GRAND STRATEGY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA: OPTIMISTIC REALISM

Victor D. Cha

The Japanese have always considered the Koreans to be an inferior race. [Wajima] said that a very elaborate study on the racial characteristics of Koreans had been prepared during the war, and that it had concluded that the mental and social capacities of the Koreans were of a very primitive nature. He said that this feeling on the part of the Japanese that Koreans are inferior to a great extent motivates Japanese uncertainty and hostility in regard to the Koreans.

Conversation with Japanese Official,  
1949<sup>1</sup>

An all-out invasion of Japan by Korea is inevitable if Korea is unified . . . [when it comes] it will be a blitz attack like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait . . . therefore it is in Japan's best interests to help North Korea economically so the Korean peninsula remains divided as now.

Kenichi Takemura, 1991<sup>2</sup>

Korea is one of the most complex, critical, and yet understudied of Japan's foreign policy relationships. While much attention in U.S. policy and academic circles has focused on Japan's future relations with China as the key variable for regional stability in the 21st century, an integral part of the security dynamic in East Asia has been driven by the Japan-Korea axis<sup>3</sup> In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this relationship was a proximate cause of two major power wars in Asia (i.e., Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese). During the Cold War, the Japan-Republic

of Korea (ROK) axis facilitated the American presence as an Asia-Pacific power and security guarantor. And in the post-Cold War era, outcomes in the Japan-Korea (united or still divided) relationship are critical to the shape of future balance of power dynamics in the region and, with it, the future American security presence. How, then, should we be thinking about future Japanese relations with the Korean peninsula? What are Tokyo's hopes and concerns with regard to Korea? How do they view the prospect of a united Korea? Is there a Japanese "grand strategy" regarding the peninsula?

The conventional wisdom offers a pessimistic response to these questions. As encapsulated in the epigraphs at the head of this chapter, this view posits a combination of historical contempt and geopolitics as auguring poorly for Japan's relations with a united Korea, hence compelling the Japanese in the direction of policies aimed at propping up the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) and keeping the peninsula divided.

The conventional wisdom is wrong. While such a pessimistic-realist view is often accepted at face value by both scholars and practitioners of Asian security, we find upon closer analysis that outcomes on the Japan-Korea axis are not nearly as negative as popularly conceived. Japanese grand strategy thinking, although cognizant of the variables for competition with the Korean peninsula, seeks actively to cultivate the potential for cooperation and preempt possible security dilemmas. This more optimistic-realist assessment derives from a number of larger geostrategic and domestic-political trends as well as from specific policies enacted by Tokyo and Seoul in the last decade that have improved relations considerably. I begin with a discussion of the conventional wisdom, followed by criticisms of this view. I then offer the argument for optimistic realism vis-à-vis Japanese grand strategy on the peninsula and conclude with propositions regarding the policy implications of this strategy.<sup>4</sup>

## Peer Competition.

The conventional wisdom argues that Japanese grand strategy is premised on avoiding peer competition with a united Korea. This anticipated competition derives from several factors.

Geopolitics. Proponents of this view cite Japanese concerns about geography and potentially threatening Korean capabilities. Geographic propinquity has always made Japan—as an island nation—somewhat uneasy with its continental Korean neighbor. Should a regime hostile to Japan ever control the peninsula, it would be strategically well-situated to threaten Japan. Indeed, historically when Japan faced external threats to its security, more often than not these emanated from the direction of the continent via the Korean peninsula. For the Japanese, then, Korea has always been the “dagger pointed at the heart” of Japan. This geostrategic fact will never change.<sup>5</sup>

Growing Korean military capabilities also concern the Japanese. The South Korean military through U.S. assistance and indigenous modernization efforts dating back to the Yulbok plans of the 1970s has transformed itself into a highly competent military.<sup>6</sup> What was once a poorly trained and deficient force wholly dependent on the United States at the end of the Korean war has now become one capable of defending against most ground contingencies vis-à-vis the North.<sup>7</sup> Unification would bring an enhancement of these capabilities. A united Korean military, the pessimistic realists argue, would possess a military of nearly 1.8 million with commensurate capabilities and aspirations to be a regional military player.<sup>8</sup>

Hate. Realism dictates that a significant increase in relative capabilities between proximate states can give rise to insecurity spirals.<sup>9</sup> In Japan's case these concerns regarding Korea are exacerbated by two additional factors. The first is the deep historical antagonism between the two



countries stemming from the occupation period (1910-45). Arguments on the Korean side for this anger (in Korean, *han* or unredeemed resentment) are well-known. On the Japanese side, this history manifests itself in a superiority complex toward Korea inherent in the collective mindsets of former colonizers. It is also manifested in an “avoidance phenomenon”—a combination of discomfort and frustration at Korean attempts to hold Japan eternally responsible for its history.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, this negative historical memory has become deeply-ingrained in the two peoples’ mindsets through a variety of formal and informal institutions. Antagonistic images are passed down generationally through family folklore, chauvinist histories taught in secondary schools (on both Korean and Japanese parts), and popular and mass media-perpetuated stereotypes such that the negativism becomes a part of one’s identity. This is especially prevalent on the Korean side, where parts of the Korean self-identity become constructed in linear opposition to Japan. For example, the two national holidays in Korea (March 1 or *samilchol* and August 15 or *kwangbokchol*) celebrate Korean patriotism by specifically resurrecting anti-Japanese images. The 50th anniversary celebrations of Korean independence in 1995 were marked by the razing of the National Museum (the former colonial headquarters of Japan).<sup>11</sup> When the two Korean leaders agreed at the June 2000 North-South summit to hold family reunions, the date chosen for this symbolic affirmation of a united Korean identity was August 15th—the date of liberation from the Japanese occupation.

Because Korean nationalism is anti-Japanism, difficulties in the relationship remain prevalent despite seemingly compelling material forces for less friction.<sup>12</sup> For example, despite the string of Japanese colonial statements of contrition, Koreans remain unsatisfied with Japan’s “haughty” attitude. Despite the benefit to South Korean security of the revised U.S.-Japan defense guidelines, Koreans expressed trepidation at the marginally more

active role Japan could play in a contingency in the region. While Japanese peacekeeping contributions took place under severe self-imposed restrictions and far outside East Asia, Koreans still expressed concerns about renewed Japanese militarism. Although the DPRK August 1998 Taepo-dong launch was provocative and threatening, South Koreans took perverse hidden pleasure in Japanese convulsions over the event. Seen through the lense of identity, this otherwise puzzling behavior makes sense. Remaining even mildly neutral about Japan is in essence to deny a critical part of one's identity as Korean. Advocating security cooperation with Japan becomes synonymous with treason because it would be seen to subjugate Korea to Japanese domination. This ideational barrier to cooperation is manifested on the Korean side as a general state-of-mind as well as domestic-political aversion to discussions about Japan in a positive light. It is seen by many as a more formidable obstacle than any other in promoting cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

Coupled with the history issue is Japanese concern with potential balancing dynamics in Northeast Asia. In a post-unification scenario, the pessimists argue, the likelihood of a Korea-China coalition that alienates Japan is high. The end of the North Korean threat will most likely mean decreased support for U.S. forces in Korea as well as the end of the overarching security imperative for cooperation that characterized the U.S.-Japan-ROK security triangle during the Cold War. As the new united Korean entity seeks to define its place in the region, it will be drawn into a closer alignment with China.<sup>14</sup> This is (as the Chinese are fond of saying) the "natural order of things" in Asia given the pre-20th-century history of Asian international relations when the Chinese tributary system dominated (in this sense, the post-1945 order was the historical aberration rather than the norm). It is also a function of geography (i.e., what some post-Cold War analyses of the region have termed continental power accommodation),<sup>15</sup> and a civilizational-inherent

bandwagoning dynamic among smaller Asian powers in the region vis-à-vis China.<sup>16</sup> Reinforcing this alignment trend will be a revanchist nationalism in a united Korea that finds a natural ally in China against Japan as the two share similar victimization experiences at the hands of Japanese colonizers.

Pessimists would argue that examples of this dynamic are already evident. When China and South Korea normalized relations in 1992, this rapprochement was celebrated in the language of restoring what was historically a “natural relationship.”<sup>17</sup> Even before the 1992 reconciliation, Seoul and Beijing were natural allies whenever an ill-conceived Japanese statement about history raises problems. The ROK’s decision not to participate in American-led research on theater missile defense (TMD) architectures in East Asia (while Japan has) is in good part a function of Korean desires not to alienate China.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, virtually all of the post-Cold War analyses of the region assume a consolidation of the China-Korea axis against Japan.<sup>19</sup>

### Japan’s Purported Grand Strategy: Predatory.

The upshot of these commonly-held assumptions for Japanese grand strategy is that a united Korea would possess the capabilities and motivations (revanchist nationalism) while lacking the impediments (cooperation based on the U.S.-Japan-Korea triangular alliance) for peer competition with Japan. For this reason, pessimists argue, Japan’s long-term strategy regarding the peninsula is a predatory one—to keep Korea divided and/or not encourage or facilitate a process of unification. This strategy is manifest in practices like Japan’s “comprehensive security” policy. Devised by Masayoshi Ohira, this doctrine maintained that Japan could provide for its security through nonmilitary means, which primarily meant economic assistance for prosperity and stability of the region.<sup>20</sup> Applied to the Korean peninsula, this strategy was

seen by South Koreans as thinly veiled attempts to keep Korea divided by Japan's providing assistance to the North.

Even more directly a reflection of Japan's purported grand strategy was the "equi-distance policy" for the peninsula. Conceived in the early 1970s by then Premier Tanaka Kakuei and Foreign Minister Kimura Toshio, this policy's rationale was that Japanese security was best served not by siding solely with the South but by maintaining equal contacts with both regimes, thereby fostering a balance of power on the peninsula. Similarly high-level dialogue during the Nakasone years in the 1980s was seen as part of the grand plan to keep Korea down.<sup>21</sup> Normalization dialogue at the end of the Cold War (i.e., Kanemaru mission) and current dialogue are seen in similarly negative light. Though couched in the language of economic assistance, humanitarian aid, and comprehensive security, this is all part of an overall predatory grand strategy that seeks to aid the North to keep the peninsula divided and thereby avoid peer competition.

### Reassessing the Conventional Wisdom.

*Faulty Assumptions.* The conventional wisdom is wrong (or at least questionable) because many of the basic assumptions informing the view do not stand up well to more discriminating analysis. For example, while historical and geographical arguments for a united Korean security threat to Japan abound, historical precedents for such arguments are absent.<sup>22</sup> While Korea is often referred to as the "dagger" pointed at the heart of Japan, aggression has historically come through Korea (by China) and not from Korea itself. In all likelihood a united Korea would be more preoccupied with securing its new northern border (discussed below) and gaining domestic stability than with entertaining any designs on Japan.<sup>23</sup> In addition, arguments that Japan would be threatened by a joint North-South Korean military are unfounded. The two Korean militaries together might total 1.8 million which

indeed would be intimidating for Japan. However, in a unification scenario a more reasonable merger figure for the two militaries is likely. The appropriate military force would probably number around 650,000, which is comparable to current ROK levels.<sup>24</sup>

Second, while some Japanese hold negative images of Korea, these do not necessarily derive from peer competition. The modern-day origins of these images derive in good part from critical mass news media coverage of authoritarian ROK politics in the 1970s. Japanese looked with disdain on the martial-law brutality, political repression, and human rights abuses, particularly beginning with the Kim Dae Jung kidnapping in 1973. Then an opposition political leader, he was abducted from a Tokyo hotel room by KCIA operatives in what was a clear violation of Japanese sovereignty by the authoritarian Park regime. The repressive regime under Park (Yusin system) also undertook a number of actions against Japanese nationals and press agencies in the 1970s that nearly ruptured diplomatic relations.<sup>25</sup>

Yesterday's negative media coverage contrasts sharply with today's reports praising Korean political liberalization, economic development, the Seoul Olympics (1988), the Taejon World Expo, and the 2002 World Cup. Coupled with this was an almost naive infatuation with North Korea growing out of the 1970s that was rooted in three developments: the regional detente spurred by Sino-American rapprochement; the DPRK's success as a member of the nonaligned movement (and the ROK's failure to win membership); and the poor state of Japanese-ROK relations at the time. Among the Japanese left and intellectuals, there were also views of North Korea as the true representation of Korean nationalism since the South remained under the military "occupation" of the United States.<sup>26</sup> The point here is not to deny that negative history-based images exist, but that there are plausible alternative explanations deriving from politics to explain the contemporary incarnations of these biases. Moreover, as

the origins of these emotions are traced to variables (i.e., authoritarianism versus democracy; underdevelopment versus development) rather than constants (history), then the argument that these images are unmalleable and unchanging (assumed by the pessimistic realists) becomes less credible.

The final point regarding the conventional wisdom relates to agency. Proponents of these viewpoints on Japanese grand strategy, ironically, tend not to be Japanese but Koreans. Hence, these agents are not so much providing a window on Japanese strategic thinking as they are on nationalist thinking in Korea. They assign intentions and preferences to Japan deriving from their own fears and preoccupations regarding Japan. The results are arbitrary (and often logically inconsistent) assertions about Japanese predatory grand strategy that have little empirical validity. In spite of this, because these arguments are dynamic, controversial, and "sexy" (i.e., presaging conflict), they often tend to get published over the more sober, cautionary, and less sensationalist views. From the Korean side, cognitive biases are apparent in that any optimistic or conciliatory views that may emanate from Japan regarding the peninsula are usually not taken at face value but instead are seen at best as aberrant behavior and at worst as duplicitous.<sup>27</sup>

One illustration of the Korea-bias in the scholarship is the conspicuous absence of discussion regarding the two variables most likely to cause peer competition between Japan and Korea: ROK military modernization and nuclear weapons. Some observers argue that the ROK's post-Cold War military modernization and buildup eschews conventional ground war capabilities necessary for a North Korean contingency and instead emphasizes force projection capabilities such as a blue water navy, ballistic missile technology, in-flight refueling, and satellite technology. For example, the ROK Navy recently completed the first stage of the KDX Destroyer Program which entails development of 3,200-ton destroyers (KDX1) to replace old

*Gearing*-class ships acquired from the U.S. Navy in the 1960s and 1970s. There are also plans for construction by 2006 of nine 4,300-ton destroyers (KDX2) with an operating range of 4,000 miles, and eventually acquisition of state-of-the-art *Aegis*-class destroyers (KDX3) starting in 2010. An active submarine program is also underway. The ROK's first submarine program started in 1987 and will produce 12 new 1,200-ton 209-class diesel submarines (a joint venture of Daewoo and Germany HDW) by 2001 (nine completed). The new SSU program plans include acquisition of six 1,500 to 2,000-ton submarines by 2002. This would be followed by indigenous production of 3,000-ton submarines in the future.<sup>28</sup>

This buildup has continued in spite of the acute material constraints imposed by the 1998 financial crisis, and many argue that the ROK military in looking past the North Korean contingency is building to prepare for future regional conflicts, potentially with Japan.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, a united Korean entity based on current capabilities in the two countries would undoubtedly have available to it the options of nuclear weaponization as well as long-range ballistic missiles.<sup>30</sup> These are the variables most likely to cause security dilemmas and peer competition between the two countries, but they are never ones cited by the Koreans (i.e., conventional wisdom).

I do not advocate wholly discarding the conventional wisdom as there is no denying some elements of truth to it. Instead, this short exercise raises legitimate questions about accepting outright this view, because the assumptions which inform it, if not simply incorrect, are certainly susceptible to debate. Some of the most problematic variables that should be talked about by the Korean side are not being talked about. And there is a plethora of plausible alternative explanations for evidence cited by the conventional wisdom as validating the predatory arguments regarding Japanese grand strategy. I now turn to developing an alternate interpretation of this strategy.

*The Fear of Entrapment and Determinants of Japan's Korea Policy.* Since the normalization of relations in 1965, the factors that have driven policy toward Korea are more subtle and complex than simply an overarching desire to keep the peninsula divided. A key factor I have argued that is crucial to understanding Japanese strategic thinking on Korea has been the fear of "entrapment."<sup>31</sup> Deriving from the literature on alliance theory, entrapment generally refers to the expectations and anxieties regarding mutual support that underpin interaction between allied and aligned states.<sup>32</sup> Entrapment occurs when a commitment to an alliance turns detrimental to one's interests. It means being dragged into a conflict over an ally's interests that one does not share or shares only partially.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps more than any other factor, the fear of entrapment has been the most consistent single driver of Japan's Korea policy. Japan and the ROK are not party to a mutual defense treaty, but this does not preclude the existence of alignment patterns between the two states. As a result of their geographic proximity, prominence in the region, common security interests, and triangular alliance arrangements with the United States, the two nations exhibit alignment patterns and de facto security ties that play an important part in their overall relationship.<sup>34</sup> These informal defense links were first publicly enunciated in the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the November 1969 Nixon-Sato summit. Known as the "Korea clause," it stated that the security of the ROK was essential to Japan.<sup>35</sup> Concurrent with the enunciation of the Korea clause was the Okinawan base agreement, which stipulated that in the event of a second North Korea invasion, Japan would permit the United States unconditional access to bases in Okinawa for the defense of South Korea.<sup>36</sup> These two agreements constituted the closest approximation to a defense treaty between Japan and the ROK.

In the context of this triangular security relationship, Japan's strategy vis-à-vis the peninsula is informed by anxieties about becoming entrapped in contingencies that



were unwanted or would put Japan in awkward positions. For example, an overcommitment to Japan-ROK defense ties, in the form of strong support for the 1969 Korea clause, could lead to formal acknowledgment of the ROK's indispensable security contribution to Japan's defense. In addition, although the region is relatively stable, an overcommitment to Japan-ROK defense ties could actually have destabilizing second-order effects. Strong backing of the South could create a more volatile situation on the peninsula by increasing North Korean fears of encirclement. It could also embolden the South to become more provocative and intransigent toward the North. The result in either scenario could be a preemptive lashing out by the North, the consequence of which could be direct retaliation against Japan.

Minimizing these entrapment fears serves several Japanese needs. First, by promoting a stable status quo on the peninsula, Japan avoids having to contend with a host of politically difficult domestic issues. North Korean belligerency as a result of strong Japan-ROK ties would force Tokyo to contend with issues of rearmament and reevaluation of Article IX of the constitution. Japan would also have to deal with problematic issues such as internal monitoring of a substantial North Korean (Chosen Soren) resident population, and absorbing the potential outflow of Korean refugees in the event of a second Korean war.<sup>37</sup> Entrapment into relations with the ROK that alienated communist neighbors would close off potential export markets, thus adversely affecting Japanese economic interests, and run contrary to its *seikei bunri* (separation of economics from politics) policies. It also would run counter to the *sengo shori* post-war vision of reestablishing relations with all nations Japan had warred with or victimized in the past.

Second, by refraining from acknowledgment of a direct Japan-ROK security link, Tokyo avoids becoming vulnerable to the "bulwark of defense" argument and ROK demands for "security rent."<sup>38</sup> An additional Japanese

concern regarding such funds is to avoid Seoul's continual use of colonial contrition arguments as leverage to extract monetary forms of "moral repentance." Tokyo must also avoid succumbing to accusations that it withholds economic funds to stifle South Korea's rise as a competitor in Japanese market sectors.<sup>39</sup> Finally, Japan must straddle entrapment anxieties vis-à-vis the ROK with burden-sharing pressures from the United States. This pressure often takes the form of calls for Japanese assistance of South Korean economic development to promote prosperity and stability on the peninsula.<sup>40</sup> In sum, Tokyo's entrapment fears center on striking a balance between providing strong political and economic support for the ROK, and at the same time abstaining from overt security ties that would leave it vulnerable to South Korean demands for security rent or moral repentance.<sup>41</sup>

Understanding the entrapment dynamic is necessary because it sheds light on evidence that pessimists often point to as indicative of predatory Japanese long-term strategies on the peninsula. For example, pessimists point to Japan's reneging on the Korea clause in the 1970s (Sato in January 1972 and Foreign Minister Ohira in August 1973 made statements backing away from commitments in the Korea clause and Okinawa base agreement<sup>42</sup>), as well as the Tanaka government's attempts at improving relations with North Korea, as validation of the strategy to keep the peninsula divided. However, the alternative explanation is that these actions were motivated by entrapment fears. In particular, detente both offered Tokyo opportunities to capitalize on its *seikei bunri* policies of expanding economic contacts with new countries and heightened its desires not to get entrapped into tight alignments with the ROK. The latter could (1) undercut the former objective by unnecessarily antagonizing potential parties, or (2) incite greater hostility in the region contrary to the new trend toward conciliation at the time.

The equi-distance policy practiced by Japan in the 1970s and part of the 1980s was not so much about keeping the two

Koreas down (as the pessimists argue) as about the more complex considerations the Japanese had about the peninsula. The equi-distance policy showed how Japan's security concerns on the peninsula were of a more multidimensional nature than those of the ROK. While the paramount concern for both was an unprovoked North Korean attack, Japan was also concerned about South Korean intransigence that might provoke the North as well as by a general war arising out of the superpower confrontation in the region. These disparities in what was seen as threatening on the peninsula reinforced Japanese entrapment fears regarding strong ties with the ROK and informed the equi-distance policy.

During the 1980s, Japan adamantly stated that it would not negotiate loan agreements with the ROK if the funds were classified as security-related. Pessimists see this as evidence of Japanese attempts to avoid enhancing ROK military capabilities.<sup>43</sup> But again, this behavior stemmed less from predatory peer competition and more from desires not to become entrapped in "security rent" rationales. And when Tokyo refused to link historical repentance issues with economic negotiations, rather than being evidence of Japan's aversion to resolving lingering historical grievances, this more nearly represented the desire to avoid becoming entrapped into untenable bargaining positions. There are many more examples that could be cited, but the upshot is that entrapment fears offer an alternative explanation of Japanese behavior on the peninsula. Moreover, if one tracks the consistency of the two explanations across time, the entrapment variable can better account for changes in behavior than the predatory pessimist argument (i.e., there are Japanese policies which are not explainable by the latter argument but are explainable with the entrapment variable).<sup>44</sup>

## Components of Japan's Long-Range Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era: Optimistic Realism.

If the pessimists' argument about predatory Japanese strategies does not hold water, then what are the components of a long-range grand strategy? I argue that an optimistic-realist approach better characterizes Japanese thinking. This has four basic tenets:

- (1) Japan does *not* oppose unification of the peninsula.
- (2) Japan proactively seeks alignment with this entity as a hedge (balance) against China.
- (3) Japan does not fear and therefore seeks to preempt Korean revanchist inclinations.
- (4) Japan seeks to reconstruct the ideational base of the relationship (i.e. history).

### No Opposition to Unification.

Contrary to the view of the pessimists, Japan does not seek to keep the Korean peninsula divided. Such an assertion raises the prior question of what exactly Tokyo seeks in terms of its own national security from the Korean peninsula. Japan has two key objectives in this regard: (1) stability; and (2) ensuring that alterations to the status quo work in Japan's favor. Regarding the former objective, although the DMZ remains one of the most heavily armed borders in the world, where peace is sustained only by the 1953 armistice, an odd form of stability has emerged, one that on the whole does not disadvantage Japan greatly (or at least no more so than any of the other major powers in the region). In this sense, Japan's needs are met by the known status quo on the peninsula rather than the unknown non-status quo option. Tokyo is therefore not opposed to unification *per se*; it is in favor of stability—which at present is provided by the status quo.

But if the two Koreas chose to reunify tomorrow, Japan would *not oppose* or impede this unification process in any

way, and most likely would proactively support it.<sup>45</sup> This is because any other option would defeat the long-term objective of assuring nonadversarial relations with a united Korea (2 above). Impeding the process of unification once it started (as the predatory argument might predict) would ensure an outcome contrary to Japanese interests (i.e., an adversarial united Korea). This sort of argument is also evident in discussions of Japanese aid to North Korea. The premise of such assistance is not for the explicit purpose of propping up the DPRK and keeping the two Koreas divided, but to prevent a collapse of the North or facilitate a regime transition that would cushion unification's political and economic effects on both Seoul and Tokyo.<sup>46</sup> While the impetus for changing the status quo is not likely to come from Japan, Koreans can be assured that, once they started the process themselves, Tokyo will be obligated to support it. This would not be out of affinity, goodwill, or loyalty (although these factors may be present), but because it is in Japan's national interests to do so. Thus, to say that Tokyo opposes dubious changes to the status quo on the peninsula but still would support unification are not necessarily logically inconsistent statements.

### Balancing against China.

Japan actively seeks close relations with a united Korea as a hedge against China. Again, one of the basic assumptions in the predatory argument for Japanese strategy is that Japan fears Korea bandwagoning with China against it; however, this view runs counter to basic realist logic. South Koreans certainly welcomed normalization with Beijing in 1992. This marked a triumphant crossing of the Cold War divide, and an opening of tremendous economic opportunity. Perhaps more significantly, however, Seoul welcomed normalization because in the South's zero-sum mentality, it amounted to the ultimate diplomatic coup vis-à-vis the North.<sup>47</sup> Along with Soviet normalization in 1990, Seoul succeeded in effectively isolating Pyongyang from its two primary Cold

War patrons. In this sense, the existence of the North Korean state has acted as a sort of buffer facilitating unbridled ROK enthusiasm for relations with Beijing.

In a unification scenario, however, this buffer disappears, and a united Korea faces the prospect of an 800-mile contiguous border with a militarily and economically burgeoning communist China whose intentions are not transparent. Moreover, it faces this situation most likely without the same U.S. security guarantees enjoyed during the Cold War. In addition, renewed Korean nationalism as a result of unification may translate into animosities and suspicions regarding China. The political mood of a post-unified Korea would be distrustful of a Chinese government as it stands today. In particular, once North Koreans realize the extent of their relative deprivation under Kim Il Sungism, any residual affinity for socialism that might be harbored in a united Korea would fall by the wayside. The possibility therefore arises that the new Korean state might view China with concern, and might heavily fortify its northern border.

Similar threat perceptions are not unthinkable on the Chinese side as well. Of all the powers in the region, Beijing has the most direct stake in the status quo on the peninsula. As a recent PLA editorial stated,

The Korean Peninsula is at the heart of northeast Asia and its strategic importance is obvious, to control the peninsula is to tightly grasp hold of northeast Asia.<sup>48</sup>

More specifically, as two Chinese analysts noted, loss of the North would leave China "deprived of an indispensable security buffer proximate to both the nation's capital and to one of its most important industrial regions."<sup>49</sup> A united Korea presents Beijing with the unwanted prospect of another noncompliant power (like Vietnam) on its flank, one with a competing ideological and social system. Moreover, China would not pass lightly over the security implications of such a situation. It has already expressed concerns about

the buildup of South Korean (and Japanese) naval forces, and such concerns are likely to be heightened in the case of a united Korea.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, if relations between Beijing and the United States are tense, then the Chinese perception that the West might utilize Korean unification as a means of containing China is far from remote.

For these reasons, a lengthy 1992 report on future peninsular strategies by the Communist Party Central Committee (CPC) stated that despite Seoul-Beijing normalization, North Korea was still "China's Northeast Asian strategic bulwark." It stated that the North's absorption by the South would have a "devastating psychological impact" on China, and therefore Beijing's priorities center on preventing Korea from becoming "the route for the overthrow of socialism by peaceful means from the West."<sup>51</sup> As one specialist noted, for these and other reasons, the Chinese perception of a united Korea is therefore far from one of unadulterated optimism:

From a longer-term perspective, China is apprehensive about potential threats to its interests from a reunified Korea. In the economic sphere, Beijing is wary of competition from a united Korean economic powerhouse. Politically, the Chinese are uncertain about the role that a united Korea might play in the region and worried that Japan could eventually dominate the peninsula and undermine China's growing influence in Korea. Militarily, the prospect of a reunified Korea with at least a potential if not an actual nuclear capability is also cause for Chinese concern. In addition, some Chinese foresee the possibility that a reunified Korea would seek to reclaim Chinese territory bordering Korea that both North and South view as the birthplace of the Korean nation.<sup>52</sup>

History has shown that states with contiguous borders, whether intentionally or not, often lapse into competition driven by security fears.<sup>53</sup> In this regard, Japan is fully aware that the most proximate threat to a united Korea may emanate from China, not Japan.<sup>54</sup> A united Korea does not have the autonomous capabilities to balance against China; in addition, in the post-Cold War era, it does not have the

luxury of certain U.S. security guarantees. Furthermore, while a united Korea will certainly harbor its share of animosities toward Japan, this relationship (presumably between Tokyo and a united government under Seoul) would still be grounded in the decades of Japanese-South Korean normalized relations that preceded unification.<sup>55</sup> It would also be grounded in a familiarity bred through common security ties with the United States for the entire post-war and Cold War eras.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, the cumulative experiences undergirding a united Seoul-Beijing relationship would not extend further back than 1992. Compelled to balance against the more proximate and unfamiliar threat, Korea could look to Japan with greater fondness.

In addition, the pessimist's argument for Japanese peer competition with Korea fails to acknowledge that Japanese grand strategy is not made in the vacuum of Tokyo-Seoul bilateral relations but must be consistent and conversant with the larger foreign policy picture.<sup>57</sup> For example, Japanese geostrategic thinking in the 21st century faces a number of cross-pressures and imperatives.<sup>58</sup> Japan faces uncertain relationships with Russia and China (the latter is where peer competition is likely); imperatives for a more independent foreign policy and a larger leadership role in the region commensurate with its economic capabilities; and the need to move beyond its one-dimensional security dependence on the United States.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, pursuit of more proactive defense policies must not contradict constitutional principles; must not disregard domestic aversion to rearmament; and must not raise regional concerns about renewed Japanese militarism. A *thriving* relationship—not peer competition—with Korea seems to fit well with these needs. It provides for Japanese security and regional stability, and at the same time strikes a balance between a policy not too strong to raise regional suspicions and incite anti-Japan balancing coalitions, but not too weak to embolden influence-seeking by China.



## Not Concerned with Korean “Revenge.”

As noted earlier, the arguments regarding Korean revanchist nationalism are overstated and misfounded on three points. The first is with regard to intentions—while Korea has often been referred to as a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan, aggression has historically come from China (via the peninsula), not by aggressive Koreans themselves. The second is with regard to geography—as alluded to above, a united Korea would be more preoccupied with threats on its contiguous northern land border than with any far-flung designs on Japan across the sea. The third is with regard to capabilities—i.e., arguments that Japan would be threatened by a joint North-South Korean military are misfounded since a combined military force would be greatly rationalized.

One area in which potential security dilemmas do arise for Japan is future Korean force procurement. This breaks down along three lines—the extent to which Korea seeks naval capabilities; the extent to which it deploys ballistic missiles; and whether it becomes a nuclear power. The likelihood of any of these is far from remote. As noted above, naval modernization programs in submarines and destroyers has proceeded in spite of the 1998 financial crisis, with Korean intentions clearly to develop competent regional capabilities. On the Korean peninsula today, between the two regimes, there exists the capabilities to field a wide array of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. Seoul has expressed a clear desire to upgrade its own missile ranges beyond those specified in the 1979 bilateral agreement with the United States. Finally, DPRK interests in nuclear weaponization have been clearly documented. And on the South Korean side, if unification means a retrenchment of the United States, the two times historically that the ROK was interested in nuclear weapons were the two times the U.S. commitment to Korean security was perceived to be deficient.

From the Japanese perspective, the key to averting security dilemmas with Korea over these issues in the future is to create and maintain as much dialogue and transparency as possible in the present.<sup>60</sup> Rather than complain about the ROK's naval modernization plans (as China has done or as the ROK has done vis-à-vis Japanese peacekeeping participation and revision of the U.S.-Japan defense guidelines), Japan has taken the high road, ignoring third party speculation that the ROK buildup is directed against Japan, and actively seeking ways to enhance maritime coordination and dialogue.<sup>61</sup> This has been manifest in an unprecedented increase in bilateral security activity in the past 5 years including exchange visits between working level officers up through Joint Chiefs of Staff chairs and defense ministers, cadet exchanges, the first-ever reciprocal port calls, and search and rescue exercises (SAR).<sup>62</sup> It is also evident in activities at the Track II level aimed at creating familiarity and seeking new avenues of military coordination.<sup>63</sup> With regard to potential Korean nuclear and missile proliferation, Japan would seek to facilitate to the extent possible a united Korea's continued compliance with nonproliferation regimes (as the ROK does now). Again, the key point here is that the Japanese response has not been to complain, accuse, or rally regional support to prevent such scenarios from occurring (as a predatory strategy might suggest, or as South Koreans have done regarding certain Japanese behavior), but a more patient approach seeking to develop a cooperative foundation upon which to manage any potential problems along these lines.

### Reconstructing History.

The fourth tenet of Japan's long-term strategy is to construct a new ideational base for the Japan-Korea relationship, one that moves away from the current fixation on the colonial period and historical animosity and gives the relationship a more positive identity.<sup>64</sup> There are interesting parallels here with China. As pessimists argue,

the construction of the Korea-China relationship has been wholly positive, drawing on a common Confucian heritage and the history of the tributary system. But who is to say that such constructions will remain constant over time? As one observer noted, often-cited Korean resentments toward Japan seem equally relevant in the Chinese case:

When Koreans get around to nursing grudges, they might consider which neighbor (Japan or China) saddled them with Kim Il Sung, which gave the go-ahead for the Korean War, and which prevented non-Communist unification in late 1950 by massive, undeclared intervention.<sup>65</sup>

Traces of this sort of problem were already apparent in the negotiations leading up to the 1992 normalization treaty. As a ROK foreign ministry official recalled, China's outright rejection of statements expressing remorse or repentance for the Korean war in the treaty left a sobering subtext to the fanfare of the moment.<sup>66</sup> In addition, nationalist fervor from a united Korea might also raise Beijing's concern about the two million-strong ethnic Korean community in Manchuria (Jilin province), the largest contingent of overseas Koreans in the world. Unification raises a plethora of unpleasant scenarios for Beijing regarding mass migration or ethnic identification of this group with the new Korean state. As early evidence of this, China has already expressed disapproval of former President Roh's advocacy of an international community of Koreans (1989). Sensitivities were also manifest in Beijing's harsh charge in 1995 that seemingly innocuous Korean tour groups to Manchuria might incite secessionist movements among the ethnic minority.<sup>67</sup> In addition, during normalization talks in 1992, Beijing rejected ROK proposals for establishment of consulate offices in Jilin, and remains reluctant to permit ROK heads of state to tour this area during summit visits.<sup>68</sup>

A trend that weighs strongly in favor of a positive reconstruction of the Japan-Korea relations is democracy.<sup>69</sup> In particular, the ROK's democratic consolidation and

economic prosperity transform Japanese images of its neighbor. As noted earlier, a good part of the negativism surrounding Korea in Japan derived from the repressive practices of the authoritarian regimes in Korea in the 1970s and 1980s. As Korea developed and liberalized, the change gradually influenced the Japanese government and general public to hold more positive images of Korea and Koreans. One manifestation of this was the *Kankoku boomu* (Korea boom) in which Korean language, food, and music experienced an upsurge in popularity in Japan in the late-1980s.<sup>70</sup> Plans to start Korean language broadcasting in Japan by the end of the century have also been implemented.<sup>71</sup> A study on the Korean minority in Japan noted additional ways in which perceptions are changing:

A new image is emerging for Koreans in Japan. This new image is vibrant, dynamic, and self-confident, backed not only by growing economic power but by changing cultural attitudes.<sup>72</sup>

On the Korean side, as the country embraces democracy and progresses toward economic prosperity, its enhanced international prestige (reflected in such events as the 1988 Seoul Olympics, United Nations membership in 1991, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) membership in 1996, and 2002 World Cup with Japan) fosters a growing self-confidence among Koreans that reduces national insecurities and xenophobia, nurturing a less petty, less emotional attitude in dealings with Japan.

This process of identity change was evident at the October 1998 summit between Kim Dae Jung and Obuchi Keizo. It was not evident in the colonial apology, the fishery zones agreement, the commitment to joint naval exercises, or the joint action plan, all of which the popular press focused on.<sup>73</sup> These were undoubtedly all unprecedented material accomplishments, but what were of significance from an ideational perspective were instead the little things that went largely unnoticed. In speeches before the Diet,

Kim Dae Jung spoke of how Koreans were as responsible as Japanese for putting the history issue to rest and moving forward. The two leaders called "infantile" the fixation on 50 years of negative Japan-ROK interaction at the expense of 1,500 years of positive exchanges and cooperation. Japan trumpeted Korea's successful road to democracy while Korea lauded Japan's peace constitution and commitment to overseas assistance.<sup>74</sup> These attempts to reconstruct history, to emphasize the positive interaction over negative, to express admiration for the other's accomplishments, were not present in past interactions. They represented subtle but important manifestations of Japanese desires to change templates and transform the identity of the relationship.

#### Policy Implications of Japan's Grand Strategy on Korea.

Two questions confront this final section. First, given the chapter's interpretation of Japanese grand strategy, what are the implications for current policy? Second, how plausible are certain suggested scenarios for security outcomes in the region involving Japan given what we know about the strategy?

*Engagement with the DPRK.* The pessimists would see Tokyo's current policy of restarting normalization negotiations in early 2000 with Pyongyang as well as the overall engagement strategy with North Korea as consistent with the predatory grand strategy. In this view, Japan continues to prop up the North indefinitely with assistance, couching this in the benevolent language of engagement and humanitarian aid, but really for the purpose of averting a reunited Korea.<sup>75</sup> I do not believe this is an accurate interpretation. Tokyo's engagement policy with Pyongyang is not informed or motivated by an overarching desire to delay unification but by a variety of other less menacing motives. A degree of entrapment anxieties informs the policy in the sense that Japan still

seeks to avoid situations in which the DPRK feels so encircled and isolated that it might lash out.<sup>76</sup> Economic assistance to the DPRK is provided by Tokyo not so much to prop up the North as to avoid hard landing scenarios that would have destabilizing repercussions for Seoul, Tokyo, and the region as a whole.<sup>77</sup> Engagement is also a function of short-term expediency. Kim Dae Jung's sunshine policy and the Perry review's emphasis on trilateral coordination compelled Tokyo to step in line on the policy in spite of substantial inclinations to the contrary after the *Taepo dong* test flight over the home island in August 1998. In addition, Tokyo had few other alternatives. A hardline position after the launch (encompassing the levying of sanctions and reneging on financial commitments to KEDO) would have had little effect on North Korea and would have alienated Japan in relations with Seoul and Washington.

The likelihood of a positive result in these negotiations is not good. The DPRK's refusal to acknowledge (let alone investigate) the alleged abductions of Japanese citizens from Japan dating back to the 1970s remains a major impediment. In addition, a normalization settlement that entailed large sums of money in the range of \$5-10 billion that essentially served as a bribe to moderate the DPRK missile threat to Japan would be domestically unacceptable.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the most useful insight that the grand strategy discussion offers here is with regard to the flexibility of Japan's position on engagement. While the predatory argument would see Tokyo as wedded to engagement (i.e., as long as the DPRK is in relatively dire straits, it would prop up the regime to prevent collapse and unification), Japan's grand strategy actually allows for much greater flexibility. Because this strategy does not in fact "fear" unification (and would seek to accommodate and support such a process were it to occur), Tokyo would not be constrained from shifting away from engagement toward more coercive or isolation policies if the consensus among the allies in the region moved in that direction.<sup>79</sup>

*China-South Korea Relations.* Another policy implication that can be deduced from the grand strategy is with regard to how Tokyo views Beijing's actions on the peninsula. China has certainly had a more prominent role than Japan in the post-Cold War on peninsular issues. Beijing participates in the Four Party Talks on the armistice; it has provided the venue for much of the North-South contacts, including the ones that led to the agreement on the June 2000 Pyongyang summit; it played subtle but important roles in defusing the nuclear crisis in 1994 and in the DPRK missile testing moratorium. Tokyo, on the other hand, has been largely relegated to a secondary role, as a financial contributor to KEDO. Japan might therefore be concerned about the degree to which China exercises an inordinate amount of influence on the peninsula.

There is no denying Beijing's enhanced role in shaping events on the peninsula, while China-South Korea relations since 1992 remain on an uptick (as do China-DPRK relations given the recent visit by Kim Jong Il to Beijing).<sup>80</sup> However, while cognizant of this, Japan is not overly worried. As noted above, this is because of a realization that, in the longer term, regime type, geography, economics, and familiarity work in favor of Japan-Korea alignments and to the disadvantage of China-Korea ones, especially if the North Korean buffer is gone. The one exception to this might be economic complementarities on the China-Korea axis; however, even here the outlook is not nearly as sanguine as the popular wisdom predicts.<sup>81</sup>

*Other Security Outcomes.* Finally, what does the strategy tell us about Japanese reactions to other security scenarios in the region? Given the DPRK's unexpected resiliency and the June 2000 Korea summit, increasingly there is discussion of nonzero-sum peace solutions on the peninsula where the two regimes co-exist rather than reunite. Indeed the 2000 joint declaration between the two Koreas expressed explicit agreement between Seoul and Pyongyang that the common denominator of their

respective unification formulas was a long interim period of coexistence under a “one nation, two systems” vision. There is nothing a priori in Japanese strategic thinking that would be averse to such an outcome, but then again it would depend greatly on the circumstances of this end-state on the peninsula. If for example, the “one nation, two systems” solution left two Korean regimes in peace and compliant with arms control and nonproliferation agreements, then Japan might favor such stability. On the other hand, if this end-state came about without substantial moderation of DPRK military capabilities, then Japan would be no better off. In other words, if the inter-Korean peace solution deals only with those things relevant to peninsular security like DMZ troop reductions and artillery, but does not address long-range missiles, then Japan would most likely oppose such an outcome. Tokyo would not oppose the inter-Korean peace per se, but would be very concerned about another form of entrapment—in this case, the ROK incentive to take its newfound peace with the DPRK (i.e., moderation of the threat of invasion and artillery) and decouple its security from Japan with regard to missiles or nuclear weapons.

What about the possibility of Japan shedding its nonproliferation identity as a response to continued DPRK threats? Or, conversely, what about Japan bandwagoning with China and the DPRK to mitigate its external threats? Either proposition is certainly plausible. In the former case, Japan clearly possesses the capabilities, technology, and infrastructure to proliferate. In the latter, if one is a fan of cultural arguments for security, there exist precedents for a bandwagoning with China in the region.<sup>82</sup> The answers to such questions lie less in Japanese grand strategy on the peninsula and more in Japanese confidence in the U.S. alliance. As long as U.S. commitments remain firm, the likelihood of Japan seeking alternative internal or external balancing options is low. In other words, the causal arrow is more likely to run in the direction from a weakened U.S. alliance to alternative balancing options, rather than from



alternative balancing options to a weakened U.S. alliance. As one longtime Japan expert observed,

So long as the United States sustains its existing presence in the region, Tokyo will undoubtedly maintain its cooperation with Washington as a core element of its foreign policy. Under current circumstances, it is highly unlikely that Japan will try to establish a cooperative system with its regional neighbors in an effort to free itself from the sphere of U.S. influence.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusion.

Since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the common assumption has been that Japan's predatory grand strategy has been premised on a fear of unification and a desire to prevent it. At times this has been explicit through the equi-distance policy of the 1970s or more subtle through post-Cold War humanitarian aid and economic assistance policies to prop up the DPRK regime. But a true understanding of the relevant grand strategy must look for the continuities in Japanese attitudes toward the peninsula, not just since 1945 but over the past centuries. What emerges from this longer-term view are two constants. First, Japan has always sought a relationship with Korea that works to Japan's security advantage in the region; and second, Japan has always seen Korea policy embedded in the larger context of the region's balance of power. What has changed in the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is the mode by which Japan has sought these objectives. In the past, this was based on unilateral military domination of the peninsula; today, it is based on alignment and cooperation within the context of U.S.-Japan-Korea relations. The point to be made here is that neither of these objectives logically dictates Japanese opposition to a unified peninsula in the 21st century.

As this chapter has shown, arguments suggesting such predatory motives have done so based less on a reading of the continuities in strategy and more on historical biases

and enmity. What emerges in the former case is a grand strategy for Japan not prejudiced against unification, but actively in pursuit of unification outcomes that work to Japan's advantage in the regional distribution of power. This translates to support for the DPRK not because Tokyo wants to keep the peninsula divided, but because it wants to cushion and shape unification in stable directions that benefit Japan. Moreover, Japan seeks more political and military cooperation with South Korea not because it is carefully planning its opportunity to repeat history. Rather, it is because in the longer term there is a realization that confidence, trust, and transparency on this axis can only benefit Japan's security under virtually all balance of power configurations one could imagine in the region's future. This indeed is a very realist perspective but also an optimistic one.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 7

1. "Memorandum of Conversation on February 3, 1949, Between Richard B. Finn and Wajima Eiji, Director of the Control Bureau of the Foreign Office," from POLAD to the Secretary of State, 894.4016/2-1849, RG 59, Internal Affairs of Japan, in Sung-Hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1991, p. 72.

2. Kenichi Takemura, quoted in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 31, 1991, p. 31, in Young-Sun Lee and Masao Okonogi, "Introduction," in *Japan and Korean Unification*, Seoul: Yonsei University, 1999, p. 10, note 2.

3. Until the 1990s, there were only a handful of scholarly monographs on Japan's Korea policy (Chae-Jin Lee and Hideo Sato, *U.S. Policy Toward Japan and Korea*, New York: Praeger, 1982; Chong-Sik Lee, *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension*, Stanford: Hoover Press, 1985; Chin-Wee Chung, ed., *Korea and Japan in World Politics*, Seoul: Korean Association of International Relations, 1985; and Brian Bridges, *Japan and Korea in the 1990s*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993). Since the end of the Cold War, interest in the topic has grown, largely due to DPRK agitation and concern about contingency planning (Ralph Cossa ed., *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a Virtual Alliance*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 1999; Young-Sun Lee and Masao Okonogi, eds., *Japan and Korean*

*Unification*, Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999; Sang-Woo Rhee and Tae-Hyo Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations: Prescriptive Studies*, Seoul: Oreum Publishing, 2000; *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Japan-U.S.-Korea—Workshop II Report* by the Center for Naval Analyses, Korea Institute of Defense Analyses, and the Okazaki Institute, May 1998; Japan National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)/U.S. Center for Naval Analyses and KIDA, *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Japan, U.S., Korea*, February 1997; *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Korea-US-Japan Workshop III*, October 1999). This later generation of literature focuses on specific issues regarding trilateral coordination and DPRK contingencies; it does not directly address the question of Japanese grand strategy. Many of these works make implicit assumptions about such a strategy, but relatively few works really spell out or try to rigorously infer what such a strategy might entail (see Michael Green, "State of the Field Report: Research on Japanese Security Policy," *National Bureau of Asian Research Access Asia Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, September 1998, pp. 37-39).

4. In this chapter, I do not employ the term "realism" in strict international relations theory terms (i.e., structural or classical realism). Instead, I utilize the term loosely in that both the pessimistic and optimistic assessments of Japan-Korea relations discussed in this chapter employ capabilities-based variables to explain outcomes. This does not deny that other factors of a nonrealist nature (domestic politics, historical enmity, etc.) are employed to embellish the analysis. For other different realist interpretations of Japanese foreign policy, see Eric Heginbotham and Richard Samuels, "Mercantile Realism and Japanese Foreign Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Spring 1998, pp. 171-203; Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Foreign Policy in the 1990s*, New York: St. Martins, 1996; Kenneth Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, Washington, DC: AEI, 1996; and Michael Green and Benjamin Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism," *Survival*, Vol. 38, No.2, Summer 1996, pp. 35-58.

5. For the classic statement, see James W. Morley, "The Dynamics of the Korean Connection," in Gerald Curtis and Sung-joo Han, eds., *The U.S.-South Korean Alliance*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983. Also see Hisahiko Okazaki, "Japan-South Korea Security Cooperation: A View Towards the Future," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Cooperation*, pp. 89-90.

6. For the most recent modernization plans for the ROK military, see *Defense White Paper 1999*, Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2000.

7. Michael O'Hanlon, "Stopping a North Korean Invasion: Why Defending South Korea is Easier than the Pentagon Thinks," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Spring 1998, pp. 135-170.

8. This is based on a simple aggregation of current DPRK and ROK capabilities. The militaries are respectively 1.1 million and 670,000. For further details, see *Defense White Paper 1999*, Parts I and II; also see Bruce Bennett, "Conventional Arms Control in Korea: A Lever for Peace?" conference paper, NPEC/INSS/AWC Competitive Strategies Workshop Series: Planning for a Peaceful Korea, Arlington, VA, June 12-14, 2000. As will be discussed below, estimates based on a simple aggregation like this are flawed.

9. Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No.2, January 1978, pp. 167-214.

10. Akira Tanaka, "Japan and Korea—Relations Between Two Peripheral Cultures," *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No.1, March 1981, pp. 30-38.

11. Although Kim Dae Jung has gone to great lengths to improve relations with Japan, the degree to which even he lapsed into invoking images of "imperialist Japan" and blaming Tokyo in conjunction with the other major powers for Korea's division at the 80th anniversary celebrations of *samilchol* is a reminder of how deeply negative and anti-Japan are Korean conceptions of nationalism (see Kim's speech in "A Nation Recalls a Bold Bid for Freedom," *Newsreview*, March 6, 1999). Negatively-constructed nationalisms and nationalist myths are not unique to Korea; however, the degree to which this identity is so viscerally framed against a past aggressor may marginally distinguish the Korean case.

12. For identity-based arguments in this vein, see Tom Berger, "Tangled Visions: Culture, Historical Memory and Japan's External Relations," conference paper, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Boston, MA, September 8, 1998; and Gerrit Gong, ed., *Remembering and Forgetting: The Legacy of War and Peace in East Asia*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 1996.

13. In social science terms, systematic biases of a cognitive or affective nature stemming from this history on the part of the government and general public give rise to an atmosphere of distrust and contempt which makes compromise or concession in negotiations extremely difficult. This in turn prevents the possibility of amiable or rationally-based negotiation.

14. Jae-Ho Chung, "The Korean-American Alliance and the 'Rise of China,'" Discussion Paper on America's Alliances with Japan and Korea, Stanford: A/PARC, 1999.

15. Robert Ross, "The Geography of Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-First Century," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No.4, Spring 1999, pp. 81-118.

16. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996, pp. 229-238.

17. For a thorough and insightful analysis, see Chae-Jin Lee, *China and Korea: Dynamic Relations*, Stanford: Hoover Press, 1997.

18. Victor Cha, "Engaging North Korea Credibly," *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 2000, pp. 151-152.

19. Examples include Richard Betts, "Wealth, Power and Instability," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1993/94, pp. 34-77; Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1993/94, pp. 5-33; Ross, "The Geography of Peace"; and Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East*, NY: HarperCollins, 1999.

20. Seizaburo Sato, Kenichi Koyama, and Shunpei Kumon, *Postwar Politician*, New York: Kodansha, 1990, pp. 450-456.

21. Gerald Curtis, ed., *Japan's Foreign Relations After the Cold War*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993, pp. 263-272.

22. Morley, "Dynamics of the Korean Connection," p. 8.

23. For one of the early and eloquent expositions of this contrarian argument, see Mark Fitzpatrick, "Why Japan and the United States Will Welcome Korean Unification," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Fall 1991. Arguments against the Chinese bandwagon dynamic are addressed below.

24. This figure is based on the traditional benchmark of military forces as approximately 1 percent of total population.

25. See Hideshi Takesada, "Korea-Japan Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Issues," in Rhee and Kim, *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p. 125; Lee, *Japan and Korea*, chap. 4; and Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997, pp. 41-56.

26. Hideya Kurata, "Historical Perspectives on Japan-Korea Relations," conference paper, SSRC/CGP Workshop on Japan's North Korea Policy, Washington, DC, March 1, 2000.

27. For examples, see Choon-Kun Lee, "War and Peace on the Korean Peninsula," *Korea Military Review* (in Korean), Vol. 10, January 2000; Hong-nak Kim, "Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1980s," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 2, May 1987, pp. 497-514; Dal-joong Chang, "Integration and Conflict in Japan's Corporate Expansion into South Korea," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1983, pp. 114-36; and Byong-man Ahn, "The Internal Political Change in Japan and its Foreign Policy Toward Korea," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Summer 1978, pp. 179-97. For an exception to this view, see Ro-Myung Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 7, No. 6, November-December 1999, pp. 18-24.

28. On these points, see MND, *Defense White Paper 1997-98*; "Defense Ministry pushes Destroyer Plan," *Korea Herald*, June 8, 1998; Myung-ho Moon, "Debate on a Blue Water Navy," *Munhwa Ilbo*, April 8, 1997; "Military Concerned about Defense Budget Cuts," *Korea Herald*, February 7, 1998; Charles Morrison, ed., *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook*, Honolulu: East-West Center, 1997; "Major Military Procurement Projects to be Delayed or Canceled," *Korea Times*, January 8, 1998; "South Korea to Buy Eight CN-235 Indonesian Military Aircraft," *Korea Herald*, November 20, 1997; *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalization*, Seoul: Sejong Institute, 1995; Yong-sup Han, "Korea's Security Strategy for 21st Century: Cooperation and Conflict," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No.4, July-August 1997; Joon-ho Do, "Security Strategy for 21st Century," *Wolgan Choson*, November 25 1993; Seo-Hang Lee, "Naval Power as an Instrument of Foreign Policy," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 2, March-April 1997.

29. See "ROK Navy Pursues Blue Water Ambition," *Korea Times*, November 12, 1995; Seo-Hang Lee, "Naval Power as an Instrument of Foreign Policy," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 2, March-April 1997, pp. 26-36; *Wall Street Journal*, January 17, 1995; *Joongang Ilbo*, January 23, 1995; Kent Calder, *Pacific Defense*, New York: William Morrow, 1996; Aidan Foster-Carter, *Korea's Coming Reunification: Another East Asian Superpower?* Economist Intelligence Unit, Special Report No. M212, London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1992.

30. Given current trends in both Koreas, it is difficult to imagine a future Korea without some form of substantial ballistic missile capability. The DPRK ballistic missile program since the early 1980s has produced a range of missile systems, either deployed or tested, demonstrating progress beyond most expectations. Despite its dire

material constraints, the North accomplished this largely through reverse-engineering of SCUD-B missile technology acquired from the Soviet Union. The August 1998 test flight of the *Taepodong-1* over Japan demonstrated an unexpected leap in IRBM technology (albeit a failed 3-stage payload launch). The ROK has sought to move away from a 1979 agreement with the United States that restricts South Korean missile ranges to 180 km. Seoul wants greater independence from the United States in terms of an indigenous missile program capability and membership in the MTCR which would enable the ROK to develop missiles to 300 km. To the surprise and unease of the U.S. government, the ROK test fired a surface-to-surface missile some eight months after the *Taepodong* test, demonstrating both the capabilities and determination to develop a more advanced and independent missile deterrent (analysts maintain that the South Korean missile already violates the 1979 limits but was deliberately under-fueled to deflect accusations by the United States). U.S. intelligence reports cite evidence of clandestine ROK activities in rocket motors indicative of an effort to develop longer-range missiles (*New York Times*, November 14, 1999). In addition, the ROK has renewed strong interest from the 1970s in a civilian space launch vehicle program (see Calvin Sims, "South Korea Plans to Begin Rocket Program," *New York Times*, January 15, 2000).

31. Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

32. Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4, July 1984, pp. 461-496; and *Alliance Politics*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

33. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," p. 467.

34. For example, throughout post-war and Cold War eras, the two states essentially comprised an integrated unit in U.S. defense planning in the region. The presence of American ground troops in South Korea was as much an extending frontline of defense for Tokyo as it was for Seoul. Similarly, the U.S. Seventh fleet and Marine units in Japan provided rearguard support for the ROK. Joint U.S.-Korea military exercises regularly employed bases in Japan for logistic support; U.S. tactical air wing deployments rotated frequently between Japan and Korea; and air and naval surveillance of North Korea was operated out of bases in Japan. In addition, Seoul and Tokyo conducted periodic exchanges of defense officials, developed bilateral forums for discussion of security policies, and engaged in some sharing of military intelligence and technology.

35. "Joint Communiqué Between President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato," November 21, 1969, sec. 4.

36. This commitment was originally made in Sato's National Press Club address in Washington after release of the Nixon-Sato joint communiqué. Also see Eisaku Sato, "New Pacific Age," *Pacific Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 1970, pp. 333-340.

37. Monitoring of the *Chosen Soren* was a constant source of friction between Tokyo and Seoul during the 1960s and 1970s as North Korean infiltration of the South was largely conducted through Japan. The refugee issue, though less openly stated by Japanese, is nevertheless a very salient concern. These numbered between 200,000-500,000 during the Korean War.

38. This essentially states that Japan should provide economic aid as a form of "security rent" to the ROK as the latter bears the burden of undergirding stability in the Japanese defense perimeter.

39. This is termed the "boomerang effect." For example, South Korean authorities accused Tokyo of denying funding of the Kwangyang Steel works complex because Japan's earlier support of the P'ohang steel complex in 1969 made the ROK a rival supplier of steel. More recently, the ROK has used this argument in connection with Japanese reluctance to provide technology. Japan does not want to give in to South Korean complaints and become locked into investment projects in the ROK when cheaper sources of labor exist elsewhere (e.g., Southeast Asia). In addition, Tokyo sees technology transfer issues as a private sector decision beyond the realm of direct government influence (see Akira Kubota, "Transferring Technology in Asia," *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 1986; Hy-sang Lee, "Japanese-South Korean Economic Relations on Troubled Economic Waters," *Korea Observer*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Summer 1985; and Soon Cho, "A Korean View of Korean-Japan Economic Relations," in Chin-wee Chung et al., eds., *Korea and Japan in World Politics*, Seoul: KAIR, 1985).

40. One manner of contending with these forces was, as noted earlier, the "comprehensive security strategy" (CSS). First conceptualized by Ohira in 1973 and later formalized by Suzuki in 1981, this states that Japan will promote regional peace and stability through nonmilitary means.

41. For elaboration of the argument, see Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, chap. 2.

42. *Korea Herald*, January 9-11, 1972, and August 4, 1973.



43. Lee, *Japan and Korea*, p. 118.

44. An in-depth discussion of the empirical tests is beyond the scope of this chapter. See Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, chap. 7.

45. For arguments in a similar vein, see Young-sun Lee and Masao Okonogi, "Introduction," in Lee and Okonogi, eds., *Japan and Korean Unification*, pp. 9-10.

46. See Masao Okonogi, "The North Korean Crisis and Japan's Political and Diplomatic Responses"; Tetsuo Murooka, "North Korean Economic Policy and Implications for Japan's Economic Assistance"; and Yukiko Fukagawa, "Japan's Economic Assistance to North Korea," all in Lee and Okonogi, eds., *Japan and Korean Unification*.

47. On the ROK's zero-sum mentality and classically realist conceptions of security, see Patrick Morgan, "The U.S.-ROK Strategic Relationship," in Donald Clark et al., eds., *U.S.-Korean Relations*, Claremont, CA: Keck Center, 1995, pp. 81-106.

48. *PLA Daily*, July 10, 2000 (editorial).

49. Jia Hao and Shuang Qubing, "China's Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 1992, p. 1137.

50. "Chinese Military Wary of Naval Buildup of Japan, Korea," *Korea Herald*, November 10, 1992.

51. See Korean coverage of the CPC report in *Mal* ([Free] Speech), October 1994 in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-EAS* (henceforth *FBIS-EAS*)-94-245, December 21, 1994, pp. 38-46.

52. Bonnie Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions: Interests and Ambitions," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 3, March 1993, pp. 261-262.

53. John Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1993, p. 54.

54. It is interesting to note that in a 1993 trip to Beijing, ROK Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo explicitly stated that while Japan once administered Korea as a colony, it was no longer seen as threatening (see Frank Ching, "Securing Northeast Asia," *FEER*, November 11, 1993, p. 42).

55. For arguments regarding Japan-South Korea cooperation implicitly as a hedge against China, see Takesada, "Korea-Japan Defence Cooperation: Prospects and Issues," in Rhee and Kim, eds.,

*Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 131-133; Hiroyasu Akutsu, "Strengthening the U.S.-Centered Hub-and-Spokes System in Northeast Asia," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 146-151; Narushige Michishita, "Alliances After Peace in Korea," *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Autumn 1999, pp. 68-83; and Okazaki, "Japan-South Korea Security Cooperation."

56. While these relations do not constitute "institutions" in the formal sense of a European NATO or EC, they do breed a familiarity between Japanese and Korean leaders. For a related point on how such institutions engendered a familiarity among European leaders that mollified anxieties about German reunification, see Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," p. 13. On the need for building on this baseline of familiarity, see Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," p. 24; and Kang Choi, "Korea-Japan Security Cooperation in the Post-Unification Era," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p. 293.

57. Shinobu Miyachi, "Korea-Japan Cooperation Can Stabilize and Balance Their Alliances with the U.S.," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 262-265; Francis Fukuyama and Kongdan Oh, *The U.S.-Japan Security Relationship After the Cold War*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1993, pp. 7-48.

58. For background, see "The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: A Report of the Prime Minister's Advisory Group on Defense Issues," August 12, 1994; Mike Mochizuki and Michael O'Hanlon, "A Liberal Vision for the U.S.-Japanese Alliance," *Survival*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Summer 1998, pp. 127-134; and *Reshaping the U.S.-Japan Alliance: From Containment to Regional Security*, New York: Ralph Bunche Institute on the UN and the Research Institute for Peace and Security (Japan), May 1998.

59. Nakashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 174-75; Green and Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy," pp. 35-58; and Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," pp. 21-22.

60. Nagashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p.171; and Umio Otsuka, "Prospects of Japan-Korea Defense Cooperation: Partners or Rivals," conference paper, Hudson Institute Conference on Japan and Korea's Future, Tokyo, December 5-6, 1997.

61. Interviews with Maritime Self-Defense Forces officers. Also see Akutsu, "Strengthening the U.S.-Centered Hub-and-Spokes System in Northeast Asia," pp. 155-158.

62. Akihisa Nagashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 165-166; Sumihiko Kawamura, "SLOC Protection and Korea-Japan Cooperation," in *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, Rhee and Kim, eds.; and Hahnkyu Park, "Between Caution and Cooperation: The ROK-Japan Security Relationship in the Post Cold War Period," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Summer 1998.

63. See Akira Ogawa, "K-J Shuttle 1997-1999," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 325-356; and Ralph Cossa, ed., *U.S.-Korea-Japan Security Relations: Toward a Virtual Alliance*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 1999. With regard to the exchanges and minor joint exercises documented in these works, these might objectively appear like small accomplishments; however, it was only within one generation's lifetime that the notion of Japanese military personnel setting foot again on Korean soil provoked wrenching reactions. The stigma was so acute that Syngman Rhee during the Korean war threatened to surrender the entire country to the communists rather than enlist Japanese support in 1950; Korea threatened to sink Japanese boats in violation of territorial fishing waters; and ceremonial defense exchanges in the 1960s were downplayed publicly. In this light, security cooperation represents a major transformation of relations.

64. For example, see Shinobu Miyachi, "Korea-Japan Cooperation can Stabilize and Balance Their Alliance with the U.S.," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 270-271.

65. Fitzpatrick, "Why Japan and the United States Will Welcome Korean Unification," p. 430.

66. Kim Won-soo (then director, Treaties Division, MOFA), interview by author, Stanford, CA, October 26, 1994. The only reference agreeable to China was to the "abnormal" state of past relations (*bijôngsang kwan'gye*) (see the Roh-Yang Shangkun communiqué in MOFA, *Woegyo yônpyo*: 1992, Diplomatic Documents Annual, pp. 560-561).

67. See "After 1300 Years, White Collar Armies Target Manchuria," *Wall Street Journal*, October 9, 1995; and "Beijing Asks Seoul to Curb Activities of Korean Civilian Body in Manchuria," *Korea Herald*, October 11, 1995.

68. By contrast, meetings with expatriate communities are a standard itinerary item in ROK summits to Japan, the United States, South America, and Europe (Kim Won-soo [former Director, Treaties Division, MOFA], personal interview by author, Stanford, CA, October 26, 1994).

69. See Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, chap. 7; and Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," p. 25. For a contrasting argument that questions the degree to which the two perceive each other as democracies, see John Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

70. See Kil Soong-hoom et al., "Han-II kwan'gye chiha sumaek chindan," (Examining the Hidden Pulse), *Chongyong Munhwa*, September 1984, pp. 149-150; and "Japan's Korea Boom," *Korea Herald*, September 8, 1988.

71. Jong-suk Lee, "Measures on the Import of Japanese Pop Culture," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January-February 1997, p. 92.

72. Dianne Hoffman, "Changing Faces, Changing Places," *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4, October-December 1992, p. 489.

73. See Nakashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 167-168; *Choson Ilbo*, October 11, 1998; *Washington Post*, October 8, 1998; *New York Times*, October 8, 1998.

74. See transcripts of Kim Dae Jung's address to the National Diet, October 8, 1998, and the Joint Declaration, October 9, 1998 (unofficial translations), at <http://www.kocis.go.kr>.

75. For a statement of this view (although the author disagrees with it), see Dong-man Suh, "Outlook for North Korea-Japan Ties," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 8, No. 2, March-April 2000, pp. 27-43.

76. This became less of a factor for Japan after the transition from the YS to DJ governments in Korea and the concomitant shift to an open-ended engagement policy by Seoul that did not seek to isolate Pyongyang.

77. See Murooka, "North Korean Economic Policy and Implications for Japan's Economic Assistance"; and Fukugawa, "Japan's Economic Assistance to North Korea."

78. For discussion of the sums of money involved and the relationship of such an agreement with the 1965 Japan-ROK treaty, see

Mark Manyin, "North Korea-Japan Relations: The Normalization Talks and the Compensation/Reparations Issue," *CRS Report*, April 21, 2000.

79. An interesting contrast here is with China. Unlike Tokyo, Beijing's grand strategy for the peninsula is explicitly premised on maintaining the division and hence the DPRK buffer on its southern flank. This strategy thus compels China to engage and prop up the North. Moreover, the more the regional consensus shifts in favor of containment, the more wedded Beijing becomes to engagement with the DPRK. Japan faces no such constraints.

80. On the former, see Victor Cha, "Engaging China: Seoul-Beijing Detente," *Survival*, Spring 1999.

81. In particular, China's growth may change its trade needs in ways that increase competition with Korea. Already, a combination of high growth and fixed resource endowments have made China a net importer of food products and raw materials, and a net exporter of labor-intensive manufactured goods. Given China's comparative advantage in labor costs, this leads to fierce competition with Korean industries for international markets. Competition also grows as Korea faces pressures from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to liberalize, making the country more vulnerable to a flood of Chinese imports (see David Dollar, "South Korea-China Trade Relations," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29, No. 12, December 1989, pp. 1167-1168; and Cha, "Engaging China," pp. 91-93.

82. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*; Ross, "Geography of Peace"; and Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1997, pp. 50-64.

83. Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," p. 20; also see Thomas Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-Militarism," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Spring 1993; and Pyle, *The Japanese Question*.

# CHAPTER 8

## ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES FOR UNIFICATION<sup>1</sup>

Marcus Noland

### Introduction.

On the Korean peninsula, the world confronts a face-off between what is surely one of the greatest success stories of the post-war era and one of the last of a dying breed of totalitarian dinosaurs. This situation creates fundamental policy dilemmas of enormous practical and ethical import for the rest of the world. Judged in terms of the share of population under arms or the share of military expenditures in national income, North Korea continues to maintain the most militarized society on Earth. It produces and exports ballistic missiles and is thought to possess large stores of chemical and biological weapons, and possibly nuclear weapons as well. It invaded the South once and in subsequent years engaged in state-sponsored terrorism against the South. Internally, it maintains a personality cult around the deceased Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il, of religious proportions and has one of the worst human rights records of any state existent today. A famine has claimed the lives of perhaps 10 percent of the pre-crisis population. This is fundamentally a systemic crisis, not a period of aberrant performance due to bad weather or unfavorable external shocks, though both have contributed to North Korea's current predicament. Yet to paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of the regime's collapse have been an exaggeration, and its durability has confounded numerous observers.

The Kim Jong II regime presents the United States with strategic and humanitarian challenges, and its peaceful elimination would surely be the first-best solution from a U.S. perspective. Two aspects of that statement bear elaboration. First, note the use of the term “regime.” Ultimately, it is the Kim Jong II regime that presents the United States with such challenges—not the existence of an independent North Korean state. Presumably the United States could easily live with a divided though suitably demilitarized peninsula. Whether a non-Kim regime would be viable in the North for any extended period of time is another matter, and there are reasons for skepticism. But from the standpoint of logical consistency, we should be clear that it is the regime, not the state, to which we fundamentally object.

Second, note the modifier “peaceful.” Obviously, if we could obtain our first-best solution in a relatively costless manner, that would be our preferred option. Presumably, as costs increase, less ambitious outcomes would begin to appear more attractive. At the extreme, few, if any, U.S. policymakers would regard total war as an acceptable cost for the elimination of the Kim Jong II regime.

These two considerations quickly lead us into the gray world of choosing among second-bests. I have been charged with writing a chapter on the economics of Korean unification. However, as implied in the discussion above, unification itself could take different modalities and be achieved through different paths. For the sake of concreteness, I will focus on two possibilities. In the first, unification is a protracted, negotiated process yielding some kind of confederation or “one nation, two systems” outcome. This is the official position of both the North and South Korean governments today as reaffirmed in the June 2000 summit.

The other option, of course, is the collapse of North Korea and its absorption into South Korea along the lines of the German experience. These two options are neither

exhaustive, nor mutually exclusive: the two states could enter into a consensual process of unification and the North could collapse before this was completed, or one side or the other could attempt a forcible unification. Nevertheless, the dichotomy is useful for illustrating some alternative conceptions of the economic precursors to unification as well as to its effects.

### Consensual Unification.

Both North and South Korea have expressed a desire for a consensual unification of the peninsula. Kim Dae Jung has repeatedly indicated his lack of interest in undermining the DPRK and has instead called for peaceful coexistence. In his "Berlin Declaration" of March 2000, President Kim indicated that the South Korean government was willing to directly support the economic rehabilitation of the North, and "economic cooperation" was identified as one of the priorities for action in the June 2000 summit declaration. The South Korean unification plan is gradual in the extreme, envisioning a process of unification lasting two generations. It put forward a plan for federation at the summit.

For its part, North Korea has proposed a Confederal Republic of Koryo to be governed by a national assembly consisting of an equal number of representatives from North and South Korea.<sup>2</sup> The statement in a 1999 meeting at the Council of Foreign Relations by North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun that North Korea could consider a "one country, two systems" model along the lines of Hong Kong and China could be interpreted as a signal that North Korea was open to this kind of engagement.

The announcement in April 2000 that leaders of the North and South would meet in the first ever North-South summit stunned the world. While this could be no more than a tactical move on the part of the North Koreans timed to extract maximum concessions out of an electorally weak Kim Dae Jung and pliant Clinton administration, the



possibility that this represents a significant strategic shift on the part of a newly confident Kim Jong Il cannot be entirely discounted.<sup>3</sup> Only time will tell. It is hard to argue, though, that recent diplomatic developments reduce the likelihood of consensual integration.

In a formal sense, one can imagine a series of progressively deeper steps of integration that the states could undertake. Perhaps the first, and simplest, would be the formation of a free trade area, freeing trade between the two Koreas but permitting each to restrict trade with third parties according to their own interests. This would be equivalent to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in which trade is unencumbered among the United States, Canada, and Mexico, but each country maintains its own trade policies with respect to nonmembers. Even this first step would appear to be far beyond anything that can be seriously expected in the near term. The next step would be the formation of a customs union which would involve applying a common policy to trade with third parties. This would be akin to the European Economic Community (EEC).

Economic union would be a deeper form of integration, permitting the free movement of labor, capital, and goods across borders, as exists in the European Union (EU) today. A monetary union would involve the adoption of a single currency, as is in process in some EU member states today. A social union would involve the adoption of common labor and social welfare policies in the two states. The final stage would be political union and the surrender of independent claims on sovereignty. The EU has managed to create an economic union and is in the process of forging social and political union. Within this schema there are differing degrees of surrender of local authority to central governments. Presumably, given the radically different social and political systems of North and South Korea, any form of consensual political integration would involve the maintenance of extensive local autonomy. Indeed, given the highly centralized nature of the governing systems of both

North and South Korea, issues of local autonomy and control would presumably be highly contentious under any unification scheme.

*Coping with the Present.* Thus the prerequisites for a consensual unification would be maintenance of two independent states and a sufficient degree of convergence of economic and political practices to make the outcome plausible. In the case at hand, this means averting a collapse in the North and generating sufficient reform in the North's economic and political system to make some degree of integration with the South sustainable. The issue of political change is well beyond my competence, and I will focus on the economic issue.

In the simplest terms, the North Korean economy no longer works. It does not generate enough output to sustain its population biologically, nor, absent fundamental economic reforms, will it do so in the future. Faced with this situation, Pyongyang has pursued essentially two coping strategies. The first strategy has been the pursuit of "one-off" projects to generate foreign exchange without affecting the systemic organization of the economy. These projects would include the Rajin-Sonbong special economic zone (SEZ) and the Mt. Kumgang tourism project. The October 1998 agreement between Hyundai and Pyongyang is important in this regard. First, payments committed to by Hyundai dwarf anything that North Korea could plausibly earn in Rajin-Sonbong, and, second, the Hyundai agreement extends the possibility of the construction of a new SEZ.

With respect to the former, Hyundai has guaranteed North Korea \$942 over 75 months, with the payment schedule front-loaded for the first 6 months. (Indeed, the North Koreans used brinkmanship to extract up-front payments before the first tour visited Mt. Kumgang in November 1998.) At \$300 per passenger, North Korea stands to make \$450 million per year off the tourism agreement alone in the admittedly unlikely case that

Hyundai is able to reach its target of 1.5 million visitors per year in 2005.<sup>4</sup> To put this in perspective, this money, if properly deployed, would be enough to close the North Korean food gap and end the famine. Unfortunately, it is believed that the funds are going into the Macau bank account of "Bureau 39," a party organization controlled by Kim Jong Il, to be used to reward his cronies and prop up his rule. If this is how the Mt. Kumgang tourism project plays out, it will amount to a successful version of what Rajin-Sonbong is not—a regime-preserving hard currency earner with no real systemic implications for the organization of the North Korean economy or society.

In this respect, the rest of the Hyundai deal might be more significant. The agreement also calls for the development of a second SEZ in Haeju, north of Inchon. This appears to have far greater prospects than Rajin-Sonbong. First, the geographical location is far more auspicious. Second, it has the backing of Hyundai (and presumably the South Korean government). This is critical both from the standpoint that it provides the necessary infrastructure (which Rajin-Sonbong sorely lacks) and carries the imprimatur of Hyundai (and by extension the South Korean government). Thus, South Korean small- and medium-sized enterprises are far more likely to move light manufacturing operations to Haeju than Rajin-Sonbong.<sup>5</sup>

The second has been the use of implicit or explicit threats in developing nuclear weapon and missile capabilities in order to extract resources from the rest of the world. In this view, the aversion of a military confrontation with the United States in 1994 has given North Korea an opportunity to develop more effective means of extorting resources from the rest of the world and pushing for unification on their terms. North Korea's August 1998 public announcement of its missile exports and its test of a multistage rocket, and its apparently renewed nuclear-related activities, perhaps give some indication of the country's future course. The marriage of the rocket and nuclear programs would give the North Koreans impressive

tools with which to intimidate their immediate neighbors and create proliferation nightmares for the rest of the world. The truly frightening aspect of such reasoning is that this scenario would be a continuation of the status quo. Ironically, given obstacles to successful reform, such an externally high-risk strategy might be the path of least resistance internally to a weak and risk-averse regime. North Korea could continue to play a strategy of attempting to extort resources out of the rest of the world, offering to abandon weapons development and export while continuing to make clandestine sales. In this regard, recent diplomatic interchanges potentially represent a major step forward in stopping the North's nuclear weapons and long-range missile programs and in normalizing its relations with the rest of the world.

In the absence of significant economic rehabilitation, North Korea will require external support for the foreseeable future. Yet the world community is unlikely to continue this support unless North Korea continues to pose a security threat to its neighbors. Collapse would pose great risks to international political stability, especially if it were accompanied by civil war and military intervention by external powers. Surrounding countries—South Korea, China, and Japan—and the United States have demonstrated a willingness to provide this support and more, for fear of North Korea's collapse, or, what would be worse, an internal conflict or lashing out which could put millions of people in Northeast Asia in harm's way, including thousands of U.S. troops stationed in South Korea and Japan.

The provision of such aid is tied to the existence of this security threat. If North Korea was simply a country with a broken economy and 22 million impoverished citizens, it is extremely unlikely that a multinational consortium would be pouring in billions of dollars of aid in the form of food and infrastructural investments. There are plenty of such countries in Central Asia and Africa, but the rest of the world does not build them light water nuclear reactors or

refurbish their electrical grids. Indeed, one could argue that not even the famine distinguishes North Korea—the contemporaneous situations in Africa are as bad if not worse.<sup>6</sup> Rather, North Korea's ability to extract such resources from the world community is intimately related to the threat it poses, so that, in this sense, the status quo more closely resembles extortion than charity. The threat North Korea poses is its sole asset. It is unlikely to negotiate away this asset very easily.

*Getting from Here to There.* All this is to say that successful consensual unification would require a significant reorientation of North Korean policy. Cooperation could be expected to yield economic benefits to North Korea in the form of enhanced trade and investment, assistance from multilateral development banks, and settlement of post-colonial claims against Japan. At the same time, to obtain these benefits North Korea presumably would have to forego its current revenues from exportation of medium-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, and counterfeiting. Furthermore, North Korea would have to settle private claims arising from past international loan defaults were it to reenter international capital markets. Such a deal could well involve the alteration or renegotiation of the Agreed Framework upon which much of North Korea's economic interaction with the rest of the world is conditioned.

Fundamental reform of the North Korean economy would have two profound effects: first, there would be a significant increase in exposure to international trade and investment (much of this with South Korea and Japan, two countries with which North Korea maintains problematic relations), and second, changes in the composition of output could be tremendous, involving literally millions of workers changing employment.<sup>7</sup> Both developments could be expected to have enormous political implications; or, alternatively, these implications could be thought to present significant, perhaps insurmountable, obstacles to reform under the current regime. Moreover, prospective

reformers in the North would have to deal with their divided country situation—something with which the authorities in China and Vietnam did not have to contend.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, it is possible that North Korea could attempt a less ambitious reorientation of its economic policies and practices supported by help from abroad.<sup>9</sup> The North Korean economy desperately needs two things to meet the minimum survival requirements of its population: food and energy. It may well be that the country obtains enough income through production or aid to attain the minimum survival basket, but chooses not to do so (i.e., the regime has a strong preference for guns over butter). Taking these preferences as given, how much additional income would the country need to hit the minimum survival basket? Under current conditions North Korea runs a structural annual food deficit of around two million tons. The cost of closing this gap through commercial imports would be on the order of several hundred million dollars, depending on prevailing global prices. For the last 5 years, this gap has mainly been closed through the provision of international assistance.<sup>10</sup> This reflects both North Korean political interests—why pay for something that can be obtained for free?—and the political interests of Western governments, most prominently that of the United States, which face less domestic resistance to providing in-kind “humanitarian relief” to North Korea than straight aid to the Kim Jong II regime.

In addition to food, North Korea needs energy. It is reliant on imported oil to generate fuels and fertilizer for use in transportation and agriculture. Electricity is mainly generated using coal and hydropower. Generation has been hampered by difficulties in extracting increasingly inaccessible and low-quality domestic coal reserves. Beyond this problem, the power grid (largely underground for security purposes) is said to suffer from extraordinarily large transmission losses. The 1994 Agreed Framework between North Korea and the United States provides for the construction of two light water reactors and the provision of

oil in the interim. The problem is that this is essentially a diplomatic agreement concerning North Korea's nuclear program, and does not really address the true needs of the North Korean economy. From an economics standpoint, it would be better to renegotiate the Agreed Framework, scrapping the costly light water reactors and instead building more cost-effective electrical generating systems, refurbishing the existing electrical grid, and building the necessary infrastructure that would allow North Korea to export electricity to South Korea and China, thereby earning foreign exchange.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, if these estimates are correct and the Framework Agreement as negotiated is fully implemented, the actual cost of purchasing the estimated shortfalls in grain and energy inputs, as well as desperately needed supplies of fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, etc., might not be very large, less than \$1 billion dollars.<sup>12</sup> Assuming no more interruptions in service, the Hyundai-Mt. Kumgang tourism deal guarantees North Korea nearly \$150 million annually over the relevant period. This is a minimum. North Korea receives a payment per visitor. If Hyundai were to fill all the berths on its ships, North Korea would stand to net approximately \$450 million per year—or enough to cover its grain deficit on commercial terms. Moreover, other South Korean firms have expressed interest in similar tourist ventures. If the North Koreans went through with the other projects in the Hyundai agreement, including the establishment of a new SEZ at Haeju, this could generate additional revenues.

For \$2 billion annually, one could fix the North Korean economy sufficiently that it would generate rising living standards and possibly reduce discontent and contribute to political stability.<sup>13</sup> Around half of this would be for recurrent flow consumption expenditures, and around half would be for industrial and infrastructural investments that could be self-financed through export revenues. Most of this trade would be with South Korea and Japan, with China and the United States playing smaller roles—even

with the United States partially lifting its embargo against North Korea in June 2000.<sup>14</sup> Thus the necessary recurrent external financing needs would be around \$1 billion annually.

Where could this money come from? There are many possibilities, but the single biggest potential source of additional financing would be the resolution of North Korea's post-colonial claims against Japan. This issue was raised by former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry during his visit to Pyongyang last year. The Japanese government paid the South Korean government \$800 million in compensation for colonial and wartime activities at the time of normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965, with \$300 million in the form of grants, \$200 million in development assistance loans, and \$300 million in commercial credits. The North Korean government expects similar compensation. Adjusting the South Korean payment for differences in population, accrued interest, inflation, and appreciation of the yen since 1965, one obtains a figure in excess of \$20 billion.

An additional issue raised by the North Koreans that was not included in the South Korean package is compensation for "comfort women" who were pressed into sexual slavery during the Second World War. Reputedly, settlement figures on the order of \$5-8 billion have been discussed within the Japanese government. In comparison, Yi Chong-hyok, Vice Chairman of the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, a Korean Workers' Part (KWP) organization, in remarks before a Washington audience in 1996 indicated that \$10 billion would be the minimum compensation. Japan will certainly argue that its food aid and its billion dollar contribution to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) should be counted against this charge. Some have speculated that Japan will even try to claim credit for the costs of recapitalizing bankrupt *Chochongryun*-controlled financial institutions in Japan. In any event, such sums, properly



deployed, could go a long way in restoring North Korea creditworthiness and financing economic modernization.

If North Korea were to accept the Perry review's terms of engagement, another carrot that the United States, Japan, and South Korea could hold out would be membership in the international financial organizations and the prospect of multilateral economic assistance. Pyongyang has periodically expressed interest in joining the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Membership talks have never made much progress, however, for they have snagged on North Korea's unwillingness to permit the kind of access to economic data and information required for membership in these organizations and Japanese opposition relating to unresolved political issues, most notably the alleged kidnapping of Japanese citizens. Under normal circumstances, if North Korea were to join these organizations in the absence of considerable reorientation in domestic economic policies, it would be unlikely that the multilateral development banks would make significant loans.

However, given the political importance of North Korea to the United States and Japan (influential shareholders in the World Bank, and the dominant shareholders in the ADB), one would expect that North Korea might receive favorable treatment.<sup>15</sup> Technical advice and assistance would really be more important than direct lending activities, which would ultimately only complement the activities of private investors. Working from the case of Vietnam (another Asian transitional economy where the government undertook rapid economic reforms) and scaling down the multilateral development banks' lending program for the smaller size of the North Korean population, one projects lending on a scale of \$150-250 billion annually. Not trivial, but not enough to finance even a bare-bones recovery program. More money might be available if the United States, Japan, South Korea, and others set up a special fund for North Korea at the World Bank or ADB. Such a fund

might be a particularly useful way of politically laundering Japanese reparations.

It is possible that under some circumstances North Korea could obtain international financial institution loans even if it were not a member.<sup>16</sup> For example, the World Bank maintains a special program for peace and sustainable development in the Middle East through which it makes loans in the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. It also has adopted a policy that allows it to assist countries which are emerging from crises even though they are not members in good standing of the Bank. This policy was adopted after the Bank was precluded from lending to Cambodia because of a debt arrearage problem. The key attributes in these cases appear to be a cooperative recipient government and strong support from major Bank shareholders. Bank staff have also expressed the view privately that an independent, poor North Korea would probably be able to access more lending than a unified middle-income Korea. Either way, the settlement of post-colonial claims with Japan would dwarf anything North Korea could expect from the multilateral development banks.

These developments might be thought of as the necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for consensual unification. Even if they were to occur, they would get the two Koreas only part way down the road. Moreover, these developments do not necessarily imply progress toward consensual unification. North Korea could adopt the minimalist reform program and reject unification overtures from the South. Indeed, while implementing such a program, the North might feel compelled to limit discussion of unification precisely to prevent system overload and a loss of control.

Collapse.

Of course, although this minimalist reform scenario appears relatively attainable, there is no guarantee that

such an outcome will eventuate. It is possible, though unlikely, that North Korea will not undertake the policy changes necessary to ensure its own survival, and instead could collapse and be absorbed by South Korea as was the case in Germany.<sup>17</sup> Such a development could greatly change the economic calculus on the Korean peninsula.

The relatively cheap minimalist reform scenario depends on the stability of the North Korean state and the consequent ability to maintain enormously different levels of income across the two parts of the Korean peninsula. A collapse would set in motion economic and political forces that would make the maintenance of such enormous disparities difficult, if not impossible, to sustain for any protracted period of time.

Differences between the German and Korean situations may be revealing in this regard. For one thing, North Korea is relatively larger. Its population is roughly half that of the South, whereas East Germany's was roughly a quarter of West Germany's. Second, income disparities are far greater across the two Koreas than across the two Germanys. Although the whole notion of income is problematic in centrally planned economies, pre-unification per capita income was probably three to four times higher in West Germany than in East Germany. In the Korean case, the ratio is more likely to be on the order of 12 or 15 to 1. Finally, demographically today the population of North Korea is younger than the population of East Germany was at the time of unification. The relatively larger, poorer, and younger population of North Korea all points to migration as being a potentially more important issue in the Korean case than in the German case.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, were Korean unification to occur, the government would face rising expectations among the populace of the North and a desire to migrate south in search of better lives. It is possible, though unlikely, that the government could use the Demilitarized Zone as a method of population influx control for an extended period

of time while conditions in the North slowly improved. However, the political imperative would be to improve conditions in the North rapidly.

The conventional wisdom is that the Germans made a fundamental mistake in setting the unification exchange rate, and considerable economic distress in East Germany was due to this avoidable error. A more careful analysis suggests that it was wage policies, a product of German institutions and political incentives, not the exchange rate that priced East German labor out of the market. Moreover, misguided labor market policies were compounded by mistakes regarding privatization and restitution policies, as well as competition (antitrust) policies, all of which combined to greatly reduce the demand for goods produced in East Germany.<sup>19</sup> However, even under a relatively optimistic scenario of moderate, controlled, cross-border migration, and rapid convergence in North Korea toward South Korean levels of productivity, bringing the level of income in North Korea to half that of the South would require a decade and hundreds of billions of dollars of investment—transfers larger in relative terms than in the German case.<sup>20</sup>

This would not be pure “cost,” however. Some in South Korea could arguably benefit in this scenario. Investment in the North would earn remitted profits to owners of capital in the South, and the process could be expected to shift the distribution of income away from labor and toward capital. At the same time, there would be shifts in the income distribution among different classes of labor, with the distribution of income shifting toward higher skilled classes of labor. Another cleavage would be between sectors producing internationally traded goods such as manufactures, and nontraded goods such as construction, with the nontraded goods sector doing relatively better. The bottom line is that if you are a South Korean construction magnate with savings to invest in unification bonds, Korean unification could be very good for you. If you are a

low-skilled manufacturing worker, it could be a very different story.

The question then arises as to what, if anything, can South Korea, the United States, and others do to prepare for such a contingency? South Korea's need to prepare for the contingencies of unification with North Korea and its need to strengthen its financial system in the wake of its own financial crisis coincide. In the event of unification, there is absolutely no reason to finance the construction of infrastructure out of current tax receipts. Instead, the government will want to use both taxes and bonds to finance unification expenditures. Hence the development of a robust government bond market prior to unification should be a priority. A second priority would be the rejuvenation of South Korea's flagging privatization program: there is no reason why the privatization agenda in the North should be more aggressive than the one that currently exists in the South.<sup>21</sup> Finally, once the current crisis in South Korea is surmounted, South Korea will want to return to a policy of fiscal rectitude, and salt away some reserves for this potential rainy day. A strong government financial position would both allow it scope for immediate expenditures in the event, and facilitate the issuance of "unification bonds."

At the moment of collapse in this scenario, there will be a critical need for close coordination among the militaries of the United States, South Korea, and China, since presumably they will be central to maintaining order, handling refugee flows, etc. This cannot be overemphasized, though further discussion is really beyond the scope of this paper. Once the situation on the ground has stabilized, longer-run political and economic policies come to the fore. As indicated earlier, there is an extensive literature on the lessons for Korea from German unification, and the South Korean government has devoted considerable resources to studying this topic.

At the time of unification, the South Korean government will have multiple (and potentially conflicting) policy

objectives. On the one hand, maintenance of economic activity in the North on market-consistent terms will be the top priority. At the same time, the government should seek to effect a one-time-only wealth transfer to the current North Korean population since they will have to adjust to market institutions with virtually no household wealth. One can imagine a multi-pronged approach:

- Adopt dual rate monetary conversion. Aim for slight undervaluation of the North Korean won to maintain competitiveness, thereby making North Korea an attractive location for investment. Convert personal savings at an overvalued rate (effecting a wealth transfer).

- Deed land to the tiller and the housing stock to its occupants, contingent on maintained use for some specified period of time.

- Maintain some kind of temporary, emergency, non-market social safety net in the North.

Having given the land to the tiller, one must confront the issue of property rights claims by past owners or their descendants and the more general issue of assignment of property rights to commercial or industrial assets. Lessons learned from the experience of Germany and other former centrally planned economies (CPEs) are instructive in this regard:

- Avoid the policy of restitution for seized assets. Monetary compensation for seized assets might be considered, though even some South Korean analysts have argued that this would be a mistake.

- Privatize quickly and avoid the cash-on-the-barrel-head model.

- Abolish inter-enterprise debts.

- Emphasize investment, not consumption, transfers.

- Accept assistance from foreigners, including the Japanese.

With respect to privatization, the experience of East Germany and other CPEs suggests that it would be best to move quickly and avoid the cash-in-advance model, since it would severely restrict potential buyers. Attempts to restructure these enterprises before privatization should also be avoided. That is better left to the market. Inter-firm debts, which are a legacy of irrational policies under the centrally planned regime, should be written off. Debt-equity swaps could be used to pay off external debt and at the same time create a stake in the viability of North Korean enterprises for South Korean or foreign firms.

Given these considerations, there appears to be one institution in South Korea ideally suited for the task of making North Korea competitive: the *chaebol* (conglomerates). Unfortunately, one policy goal (to get the North Korean economy functioning as rapidly as possible) and another policy goal (to clean up business-government relations in South Korea) would conflict. It goes without saying which one will receive the greater weight. The *chaebol* are probably ideally suited for refurbishing the North Korean economy. However, saddling them with unproductive North Korean enterprises would have an economic price (in terms of reducing *chaebol* competitiveness internationally and possibly encouraging anti-competitive behavior domestically) as well as a political one (in the form of the quid pro quo that the *chaebol* could be expected to extract).

With respect to the other actors, many of the policies that one would want to see in place in the case of collapse (North Korean involvement with the international financial institutions, for example) are really not contingent on collapse. Since in the case of collapse one would want to see the multilateral development banks involved as quickly as possible, it would make sense to get them involved and developing some country-specific knowledge and expertise prior to the event.

The big money issue would be how to resolve post-colonial claims against Japan if this had not already been done prior to collapse. If it were the case that this issue had not been resolved, it would be essential that Japan and the government of Korea quickly reach an accord so that resources could begin flowing into Korea. In the case of the United States, its role would probably be one of providing political leadership (a la KEDO) than direct financial assistance. One could imagine, for example, the United States leading a multilateral effort, possibly through a special window at one of the multilateral development banks, to provide additional financial assistance.

### Conclusions.

How this all plays out, indeed whether unification along either of the modalities examined in this paper is likely in the near future, depends, at least in part, on the intentions of the North Korean elite. A necessary condition for consensual unification would be a willingness of this elite to countenance considerable reform of current practices. Today the North Korean elite appears to be split in this regard. Pyongyang's hesitant steps toward economic reform, for example, have a two-steps-forward, one-step-back character. At the same time, there is evidence that North Korea is increasing military expenditures, even while continuing to receive a considerable volume of international food assistance and enhanced revenues from the Hyundai deal.<sup>22</sup> But the question remains whether its system-preserving reforms in the form of tourism projects, mining enclaves, and special economic zones will be sufficient to maintain social stability and avert collapse.

North Korea could count on a fairly supportive international environment were it to undertake the kinds of reform necessary to make the consensual reform path plausible. The June 2000 North-South summit, Kim Jong Il's visit to China, the 1999 visit of former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry, the resumption of discussions



between Japan and North Korea, and the expected visit of a high-ranking North Korean official to Washington during the spring of 2000 would appear to support this interpretation of events. Yet there is no guarantee that Pyongyang's current modest opening is anything more than opportunistic. History is replete with examples of countries that did not go the way their foreign patrons desired. In the case of North Korea, whether the regime is willing and able to make the necessary changes to ensure its own survival is still uncertain.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 8

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2. For details of this proposal, see Song-ryol Han and Tong U-choe, "Perspectives of Issues by the DPRK," New York: DPRK Mission to the United Nations, mimeo, 1995; and Suk-ryul Yu, "Problems for Korean Reunification," conference paper, Joint Conference of the Council for U.S.-Korean Security Studies and the International Council On Korean Studies, Arlington, VA, October 23-24, 1997. For highly informative interpretations of North Korea's unification policy, see Han-shik Park, "North Korea's Ideology and Unification Policy," in Jay Speakman and Chae-Jin Lee, eds., *The Prospects for Korean Unification*, Claremont, CA: Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, 1993; and Nicholas Eberstadt, "North Korea's Unification Policy: 1948-1996," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *North Korean Foreign Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

3. North Korea has a history of extorting resources from foreigners to secure its participation in diplomatic activities. Conversely, South Korea has engaged in "checkbook diplomacy," most notably in the process of normalizing relations with the USSR. Given the Berlin Declaration and Kim Dae Jung's willingness to directly underwrite the economic rehabilitation, it is tempting to speculate on what President Kim may have promised the North.

4. North Korea and Hyundai have been in conflict over Hyundai's desire to significantly increase the number of tourists that it brings to Mt. Kumgang by including large numbers of non-Koreans. At present, non-Japanese foreigners are permitted to join the Hyundai tour.

5. Kim Jong Il reportedly has expressed a preference for Shinuiju over Haeju, despite the latter's greater attractiveness as an economic hub. Some (e.g., Chung-in Moon, "Korea and Asian Security in the 21st century," *Asian Voices: Promoting Dialogue Between the United States and Asia*, Washington, DC: Sasakawa Peace Foundation U.S.A, 2000) have argued that the choice between Haeju and Shinuiju will signal whether economics or politics are driving policy. The possibility of a second Hyundai-developed SEZ, located at Tongchon on the east coast near Mt. Kumgang, has also been reported.

6. Indeed, bad weather does not even distinguish North Korea. At its peak, most observers believe that the North produced about 6 million metric tons of grain. This fell by roughly half by 1996 (Marcus Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse: the Future of the Two Koreas*, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000, Table 5.1). In comparison, Morocco also typically produces around 6 million metric tons, but bad weather in 1999 knocked domestic production down to around 1.5 million metric tons, a decline of roughly three-quarters—more than the drop experienced in the North Korean case. While times have been hard, there is no famine in Morocco, however. The food shortfall has been closed by importing food on commercial terms.

7. On the first point, see Marcus Noland, "The North Korean Economy," *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies*, Vol. 6, 1996, pp. 127-178; and Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse*. For detailed analyses pertaining to the second point, see Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Monica Scatasta, "Modeling North Korean Economic Reform," *Journal of Asian Economics*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1997, pp. 15-38; and Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang, "Rigorous Speculation: The Collapse and Revival of the North Korean Economy," *World Development*, September 2000.

8. See Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse*, for a discussion of the political economy of reform in the North Korean context.

9. Kim Jong Il's statements in China, praising Chinese economic reforms, may signal a new North Korean willingness to consider economic reform and accept Chinese tutelage.

10. See Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse*; or Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang, "Famine In North Korea: Causes and Cures," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, forthcoming, 2000.

11. See David Von Hippel and Peter Hayes, "DPRK Energy Sector: Current Status and Scenarios for 2000 and 2005," in Marcus Noland,

ed., *Economic Integration of the Korean Peninsula*, Special Report 10, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1998.

12. This would amount to a fairly bare-bones reconstruction program. For example, James H. Williams, Peter Hayes, and David Von Hippel, "Fuel and Famine: North Korea's Rural Energy Crisis," paper presented to the Pentagon Study Group on Japan and Northeast Asia, Washington, DC, October 22, 1999, estimate that a rural energy rehabilitation program would cost about \$2-3 billion over 5 years. Their estimated price tag for a more comprehensive economy-wide program is \$20-50 billion over 20 years.

13. One should be careful about drawing too simple a causal link between material conditions and political change. There is no theory that reliably maps deprivation to political change. Indeed, in his classic study of political change, Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968, argues that political change more often occurs in the context of material gains and rising expectations than stagnation. In particular, to the extent that political change has accompanied famine, it has usually occurred after famine episodes when conditions have sufficiently stabilized for responsibility to be assigned and blame to be assessed. During famines, populations are typically too focused on survival to engage in political activities. However, in the case of North Korea, Bill Gertz, *Betrayal*, Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1999, reproduces a secret State Department cable that refers to "extensive evidence of a major coup attempt by elements of the VI Corps in 1995, which appears to have been crushed only with some difficulty" (p. 264). The State Department has not denied the authenticity of this cable. According to Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997, after the uprising, the corps, based in the famine-stricken northeastern city of Hamhung, "was disbanded, its leadership purged, and its units submerged into others under circumstances suggesting disarray in the ranks" (p.375).

14. This assumes that liberalization in the North was on a non-preferential basis. As shown in Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and LiGang Liu, "The Economics of Korean Unification," *Journal of Policy Reform*, Vol. 3, 1999, pp. 255-299; and Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang, "Modeling Korean Unification," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, June 2000, the formation of a customs union between North Korea and South Korea would have a big impact on the North, while it would have a trivial impact on the South. The customs union would represent a major trade liberalization on the part of the North, while the North's economy would be too small to have much of an impact on the South's economy. (Think of the impact of

NAFTA on the United States or the accession of a small central European economy on the EU.) This story—big impact on the North, small impact on the South—would change considerably if integration were to come through collapse.

15. Under U.S. law, the U.S. executive directors at the development banks could not vote in favor of extending loans to North Korea until it was removed from the list of countries engaging in state-sponsored terrorism.

16. An April 2000 statement to this effect by the IMF resident representative in Seoul, David T. Coe, was immediately denounced by Representative James Saxton (R-New Jersey).

17. It is theoretically possible that a collapse of the Kim Jong Il regime would not necessarily result in the disappearance of North Korea as a state. Yet, in reality, it is hard to see how a non-Kim Il Sungist government could be much more than a transitional regime to unification on essentially South Korean terms, much as was the case for the short-lived East German government of Lothar de Maizière.

18. See Noland, Robinson and Liu; and Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Modeling Korean Unification," for modeling of cross-border factor flows in the Korean case. The latter paper finds that North Korea would be virtually depopulated before wage rates converged sufficiently to choke off the incentives for mass migration. They conclude that either cross-border migration would have to be limited, or the opening of the border would have to be combined with hundreds of billions of dollars of investment in the North.

19. See Gerlinde Sinn and Hans-Werner Sinn, "What Can Korea Learn from German Unification?" in Byong-Moo Hwang and Young Kwan Yoon, eds., *Middle Powers in the Age of Globalization*, KAIS International Conference Series No. 5, Seoul, Korea: Korean Association of International Studies, 1996; Marcus Noland, "German Lessons for Korea: The Economics of Unification," in C. Fred Bergsten and Il Sa Kong, eds., *The Korea-United States Economic Relationship*, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997; Christian Watrin, "Monetary Integration and Stabilization Policy: The German Case," in Il Sa Kong and Kwang Suk Kim, eds., *Policy Priorities for the Unified Korean Economy*, Seoul, Korea: Institute for Global Economics, 1998; Holger Wolf, "Korean Unification: Lessons From Germany," in Marcus Noland, ed., *Economic Integration of the Korean Peninsula*, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1998; Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse*, including references therein, for more extensive discussions of the German "lessons" for Korea.

20. See Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Modeling Korean Unification," for a detailed assessment.

21. Jin-young Bae, "The Fiscal Burden of Korean Reunification and Its Impact on South Korea's Macroeconomic Stability," *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies*, Vol. 6, 1996, pp. 185-202, makes recommendations to improve tax collection. He raises the possibility of privatizing South Korean government assets as a means to finance unification as well.

22. According to the Ministry of Defense, *White Paper*, Seoul, Korea: Ministry of Defense, 1998, North Korea has increased its reserves of chemical weapons, boosted KPA manpower by 10,000 troops, created a missile division, and added 10 submarines to its fleet. In August 1999 it was revealed that North Korea had purchased roughly 40 aging MiG-21 fighters and 8 military helicopters from Kazakhstan. It was subsequently reported that North Korea was trying to obtain more advanced MiG-29 and SU-30 fighters as well. In September 1999, a classified U.S. Air Force report describing alleged continued North Korean work on its *Taepodong* missile was leaked to the press. In October, in testimony before the Senate Armed Forces Committee, General Thomas Schwartz, the newly appointed commander-designate of U.S. Forces Korea stated that North Korea had accelerated its arms buildup and was forward-deploying artillery and rocket-launchers in underground facilities. In March 2000, Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander-in-Chief U.S. Pacific Forces, indicated that North Korean military exercises during the winter of 1999-2000 had been the most extensive in recent years. Russian observers claim that North Korea is emphasizing "high impact" arms over conventional weapons.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL IN KOREA: A LEVER FOR PEACE?<sup>1</sup>

Bruce William Bennett

Many experts on Korea scoff at the concept of conventional arms control between North Korea and the Republic of Korea (ROK). From the beginning, it should be recognized that arms control in Korea is a difficult problem in part because neither side has much trust in the other. North Korea worries that the ROK and U.S. war plan for the peninsula includes a counteroffensive that would destroy the North Korean regime,<sup>2</sup> and might actually be launched as a ROK/U.S.-initiated attack on North Korea. The ROK side observes the pattern of North Korean belligerence toward the ROK, North Korea's stated objective of conquest of the ROK, and North Korea's military preparations, and worries about a North Korean invasion.

Nevertheless, conventional arms control is a critical part of the Korean unification process. Arguably, the combined forces of North Korea and the ROK are so large that they would be a major impediment to unification, making some form of conflict more likely, exercising significant influence potentially counter to unification, and consuming too much of the Korean Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

If the Koreans are to unify peacefully, conventional arms control must become feasible somewhere along that peaceful path. If unification is not peaceful, conventional arms control performed before the conflict would reduce the damage suffered by both sides. Nevertheless, arms control has its risks, such as providing the other side critical information on defense capabilities and plans. In the end, if unification by either war or peace could occur within the

next decade or two, conventional arms control is needed now; but if unification must wait for the distant future (say, 50 or more years), then conventional arms control can wait for a part of that time.

This chapter discusses objectives for conventional arms control and the means for achieving these objectives. It assesses the military forces on both sides and proposes how the dangerous aspects of these forces could be addressed. In the end, arms control of the form proposed herein might not be possible in Korea; if it is possible, it will undoubtedly take many years. Thus, arms control should not be viewed as a quick fix to the conventional military problems in Korea, but rather as a part of the long-term reconciliation process. Indeed, given the power of the North Korean military, conventional arms control in Korea will be an indicator of the progress toward peaceful unification. Still, any progress may occur in very small steps that frustrate those seeking rapid resolution of the Korean separation.

## OBJECTIVES FOR AND CONSTRAINTS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

Before examining Korean military forces and specific options for arms control, it is important to identify objectives for and constraints on arms control. This section describes both the general objectives for arms control and some specific objectives that are important for Korea both now and in the future. It also looks at some of the constraints that might limit arms control efforts in Korea, and suggests some principles for addressing these constraints.

### General Objectives.

Arms control has traditionally been associated with three general objectives: (1) to reduce the costs of military forces in peacetime, (2) to reduce the chances of future war, and (3) to decrease the damage that war would cause. Each of these has potentially important roles in Korea.

With regard to the first goal, both North Korea and the ROK spend a considerable amount of money on their military forces. In 1997, North Korea had a defense budget of nearly \$5 billion, or about 27 percent of its GNP.<sup>3</sup> In 1999, the ROK had a defense budget of nearly 14 trillion won, or about 2.9 percent of its GDP.<sup>4</sup> Arms control reductions in force structure by both sides would decrease these costs, particularly assisting North Korea in fulfilling the needs of its population and its economy. Even a reduction in the ROK military budget could be usefully moved to other services in the ROK.

The threat of large, capable forces launching an offensive across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has been a consistent concern by both sides in Korea. Reductions in these forces should lower concerns about offensives, decreasing the chances of war. Arms control can also involve confidence-building activities and increase contacts between the two sides that foster understanding and trust, all of which would reduce the chances of war.

The large military forces on each side in Korea could cause substantial damage to the other side in any conflict, including large amounts of damage to the civilian populations and society. Decreasing the force structure on both sides should reduce the damage that each side would suffer.

#### Specific Short-term Problems to Address.

As noted above, the large North Korean and ROK military forces facing each other across the DMZ may increase both the chance of war and the potential damage that war would cause. In addition, the military in North Korea has become a major power base. North Korean active duty military forces represent about 5 percent of the total population (compared to 1.5 percent in the ROK and about 0.5 percent in the United States). Given the failures of the North Korean economy and political system, it is often argued that the military holds a preeminent position.



The power of the North Korean military complicates the political decisionmaking in North Korea today, and would likely complicate any North Korean political collapse. The North Korean military poses a unique threat to the survival of the Kim regime, as it is one of the few organizations with sufficient power to overthrow the regime. Consistently, the North Korean military is given priority on food and other resources, which otherwise could be used to rejuvenate the North Korean economy and sustain the North Korean civilian population. A North Korean military of more modest size would pose less of a threat, consume fewer resources, and exert less influence on political decisionmaking.

If the North Korean regime were to collapse or be overthrown, there would be serious problems caused by large, very powerful factions within the military/party that could seek different outcomes in the resulting struggle for control. Moreover, there would not likely be sufficient resources to meet the needs of all of these factions, increasing the likelihood of a violent, multi-sided civil war. While a smaller North Korean military would not necessarily prevent such difficulties from developing, the potential number of conflicts would be reduced, as would the likely level of violence.

For years, North Korea has supported a large military hoping that its size would deter ROK and U.S. attacks on the North, and give North Korea some chance of conquering the ROK in an actual conflict. For a decade or more, the North Korean leadership has apparently recognized that ROK and U.S. qualitative military superiority jeopardizes both of these objectives, despite the size of the North Korean military. North Korea has therefore chosen to develop a number of asymmetric threats (such as chemical and biological weapons) to make up for its qualitative deficiencies. Like the ROK and U.S. militaries, the North Korean military would likely be stronger for such wartime uses if it reduced manpower and outdated equipment, using the monies saved to modernize selective elements of its

forces. The resulting smaller forces would then be less of a threat internally.

North Korea would be best served by reducing units with outdated equipment and its large infantry forces. For example, tank units with T-55 tanks would be appropriate for elimination: These units would be highly vulnerable targets for ROK and U.S. forces and would give the North Korean military little strength in dealing with external forces. The ROK Ministry of National Defense is contemplating similar force changes, trading force structure for force modernization.<sup>5</sup> Both sides should be encouraged to make these changes, which would reduce the overall size of the military forces though not significantly reduce defense budgets (the money saved on force structure being used for modernization).

North Korea also deploys massive amounts of artillery very close to the DMZ. While the ROK places much of its artillery back 7 to 10 kilometers or more for defensive purposes, most of the North Korean artillery is located within a few kilometers of the DMZ, apparently postured primarily for offensive purposes. Artillery deployments so far forward are destabilizing: North Korea would fear these sites being overrun by a ROK/U.S. offensive, and might therefore seek to launch a preemptive attack in response to any ROK/U.S. mobilization (even a defensive mobilization) because of their artillery's vulnerability. Thousands of North Korean artillery pieces near the DMZ could cause massive damage to the northern 20 or so kilometers of the ROK if war began, and longer-range artillery could reach and seriously damage the heart of Seoul. This threat would force the ROK and the United States to rapidly target the North Korean artillery, and could precipitate preemptive action if North Korea mobilizes. In addition, some ROK artillery has been moved to relatively forward locations to fire against North Korean artillery under such circumstances. From an arms control perspective, both the North Korean and ROK artillery need to be reduced in

numbers and moved back to more defensive locations (especially the North Korean artillery).

The ROK and the United States are also concerned about the quantity of North Korean special forces. The roughly 100,000 North Korean special forces personnel (about 10 percent of total North Korean ground forces) provide a force which is well beyond the relative numbers of special forces in most armies, and which could cause serious damage in the ROK. Reducing their numbers would reduce the damage that would be done to ROK society and ROK and U.S. military forces.

### Paving the Way to Unification.

Except in very bizarre circumstances (e.g., a successful North Korean conquest of the ROK), Korean unification would certainly be performed with the ROK in the lead. The ROK military is unlikely to trust the North Korean military, and therefore cannot be expected to accept a true unification of the militaries. Instead, much as in the case of Germany, the eventual, unified Korean military will involve largely ROK military personnel, though potentially with some significant retention of North Korean military equipment.

In any scenario, the lack of trust between the key personnel of North Korea and the ROK is a serious concern. In contrast to the German unification case, the senior and mid-level leaders of the two Koreas, both civilian and military, have had almost no contact with each other. Given this lack of contact and the North Korean dogma about the illegitimacy of the ROK leadership, these leaders cannot be expected to believe or trust each other, making unification extremely difficult. Therefore, far more than in the case of Germany, the Koreas need confidence-building measures for the military forces to help establish communications and engender basic conditions for unification. This process must be a very slow and evolutionary one, requiring considerable time and effort; it should not be expected to yield broad trust or to develop rapidly.

The power of the North Korean military would likely complicate a ROK-led unification. North Korean military personnel would have little to gain and *a great deal to lose* from such a unification. Naturally, this kind of result could be imposed on North Korea in the aftermath of an unsuccessful North Korean attack on the ROK. But in the case of a North Korean collapse or a negotiated unification, the opposition of the North Korean military could impair or fatally doom the unification effort.

While reducing the size of the North Korean military would lessen these difficulties, other actions are required to address them in a fundamental way. Specifically, the ROK needs a plan for jobs and economic security for North Korean military personnel. At very least, this means leaving many of the North Korean military organized in their current units for some time into a unification transition period. Some of these units could help the ROK forces maintain stability among the North Korean civilian population, while others could work on developing the critical North Korean infrastructure (roads, rail lines, ports, utilities, and communications). Disarming these units would be an essential, yet very sensitive activity.

Provision would also have to be made for the retirement and care (income, protection, and life style) of most of the senior North Korean military leaders (probably colonels and above in rank), since they would be too powerful and insufficiently reliable to depend upon if left with their units. The ROK needs a plan for these actions that is well established and funded, thereby providing a guarantee of physical and financial security for the North Korean military that will greatly reduce the likelihood of rebellion against ROK control.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, the smaller the North Korean military is at the beginning of this transition, the easier such a plan will be to fund and execute, and the lower the potential for a major rebellion in the North Korean military that would impede unification.

Interestingly, North Korean willingness to seriously consider conventional arms control may be an important indicator of their real interest in unification efforts. Some experts worry that North Korea may make offers that appear to be moving toward unification, while in reality they are simply seeking to gain more aid so as to help North Korea survive as a separate country. If North Korea is really serious about unification, the North Korean political leadership must convince the North Korean military to accept actions that move toward unification. That same North Korean political leadership ought to be prepared to reduce their military forces toward the goal of unification. If the North Korean political leadership is unwilling to consider conventional arms control, their commitment to unification would have to be considered questionable.

### Dealing with the Costs of Unification.

The unification of Korea will be extraordinarily expensive. Goldman-Sachs estimates that if unification were to occur today, the cost could be \$0.77 to \$1.2 trillion dollars over 10 years; if unification occurs in 2010, the cost projections rise to \$3.4 to \$3.6 trillion dollars over 10 years.<sup>7</sup> Expenditures in these ranges would amount to 16 to 25 percent of the ROK GDP each year over 10 years (compared to German expenditures of 10 percent of GDP per year). While the ROK would seek funds to help pay these costs from other countries and international organizations, the reality is that the people of the ROK will have to bear a substantial fraction of this financial burden. Given that total ROK government expenditures are in the range of \$80 billion annually or about 18 percent of GDP, this suggests that ROK government expenditures and therefore taxes would have to nearly double to meet these needs. Of course, these estimates assume that the ROK economy is not damaged in the unification process (as would happen if North Korea attacks the ROK), and also that the ROK and North Korean economies grow smoothly after unification

starts, without disruption, recession, or other seriously disabling difficulties.

The bottom line is that after Korean unification begins, the military expenses (and therefore forces) of the combined Korea will have to decline below those of the existing ROK forces. Recent news reports in the ROK have indicated that the Ministry of National Defense has set a manpower target of 400,000 to 500,000 total military personnel by 2015,<sup>8</sup> down from 690,000 today (see Table 1); this appears to be an appropriate goal for a unified Korea. Arms control would thus be useful if it can help reduce the force sizes towards this objective. Reductions in the combined ROK and North Korean forces toward reasonable post-unification force levels would reduce the financial burdens of these forces in peacetime both pre- and post-unification.

#### Transformation of Korean Military Forces.

Current military forces in Korea are primarily “continental” in character, with ground forces vastly outnumbering air and naval forces in both North Korea and the ROK. Since both countries fear invasion from the other, and North Korea plans conquest of the ROK, this character of the forces is to be expected. However, while Korea will face some concern about its land borders after unification, it will be more concerned about securing its air and sea lines of communication. This implies that the Korean military forces must transform in the direction of greater air and naval force capabilities. Since air and naval forces tend to involve very expensive equipment, maintaining a modernized Korean military will require a general reduction in manpower levels to help pay for modernization.

Increasingly, the modernization argument can be made with regard to current North Korean and ROK forces. As argued above, both sides have large numbers of outdated weapon systems. To pay for their modernization within reasonable budget constraints, manpower and thus force levels need to be reduced. These reductions need to come

primarily in the ground forces of both Koreas. Fortunately, because the ROK Air Force modernization allows it to increasingly provide superb support for ROK ground forces, reducing ground force manpower to pay for fighter modernization can actually strengthen the ROK military.

Reducing the military manpower in the ROK offers another important opportunity. With lower manpower requirements, the ROK military draft would become less necessary. And with modernized military equipment, the ROK military would need a more professional force in all of its services (personnel serving longer and being more experienced). This change would imply that far more of the ROK military would be career soldiers, with more stability and higher levels of training. This would be a considerable change for the ROK military forces, and most likely a very welcome one.<sup>9</sup>

### Addressing Some Constraints on Conventional Arms Control.

Opponents of arms control on either side could defeat any effort to achieve conventional arms control in Korea. Particular problems exist in terms of (1) the lack of trust between the two Koreas, (2) the likely opposition to arms control from the North Korean military, (3) concerns about the adequacy of defenses when forces are reduced, and (4) concerns about nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons that would not be covered by conventional arms control. Successful arms control must address each of these issues.

*Lack of Trust.* One of the major concerns in pursuing arms control in Korea is the lack of trust between North Korea and the ROK, with both sides likely expecting that the other side would use arms control to establish some military advantage. Each side would also likely fear that the other would lie to conceal aspects of its military strengths and weaknesses. In a security environment like that in Korea, trust is difficult to foster; confidence-building

measures (as described below) need to be pursued early in the arms control process to help generate trust.

In addition, the basis for negotiations needs to be fair to both sides. As a basic principle, both Koreas should have their forces reduced to equal numbers of personnel and equipment, much as was done with the Conventional Forces Europe agreement.<sup>10</sup> North Korea would insist upon the removal of all U.S. forces as part of the negotiations, much as it has for decades. As a bargaining counter, the United States should be prepared to make modest reductions in the size of its forces in the ROK, and then have its remaining forces counted with ROK forces as a coalition total to be limited by the agreement. To this, North Korea would likely object that over time in a crisis or conflict, other U.S. forces could be deployed to Korea, with these forces upsetting the North Korean and ROK balance. The United States would therefore need to agree to some limits on the deployments of U.S. forces to Korea, as discussed below.

*North Korean Military Opposition.* It can be anticipated that the North Korean military will be the greatest impediment to arms control. The North Korean military has grown in size consistently since the early 1960s, including substantial growth from the mid-1970s through the 1980s.<sup>11</sup> Militaries that experience such growth provide great upward mobility for their officers, and a general culture of expansion. The more limited North Korean military personnel growth of the 1990s was likely resented by the North Korean military. If this limited growth were replaced by significant reductions, many personnel would be retired or otherwise cut from active duty, and likely left with few job prospects in a North Korea where manpower is already underemployed. For those who remain in the military, opportunities for promotion would be significantly reduced, and a fear of job loss might propel personnel into risk-averse behaviors.

While it is not possible to fully eliminate these fears by the North Korean military, at least some of them need to be



addressed to reduce the North Korean military opposition. There are a number of options for reducing the impact of military force reductions in North Korea. For example, many ROK firms plan to develop industrial enterprises in North Korea in the coming years. A significant number of the jobs in these enterprises could be reserved for North Korean military personnel required to leave the military by arms control provisions. Considerable thinking needs to go into planning actions like these to reduce the impact of arms control and thereby make it more agreeable to the North Korean military.

*The Adequacies of the Defenses.* Some military experts argue that while the relative numbers of military forces in North Korea and the ROK are important, the density of ground forces at the DMZ is critical to preventing breakthroughs by the opposition. Therefore, they would argue that force reductions would leave the defending forces too thin to prevent breakthroughs. The counter to this argument is that, with adequate reductions, neither side would have sufficient force to both achieve breakthroughs in the forward area and then rapidly exploit those breakthroughs in depth. With regards to the defense of the ROK, modernized equipment in both the ground and air forces would also tend to overcome the threat of breakthroughs by providing forces with sufficient mobility and firepower to cover sectors where the defense becomes weak. From the North Korean perspective, the chemical and biological weapons not covered by conventional arms control actually have far more utility for defensive as opposed to offensive operations, and could stall an attempted ROK/U.S. breakthrough. However, North Korea must recognize that the use of such weapons could lead to a serious ROK/U.S. escalation.

*Concerns About NBC Weapons.* NBC weapons are already the subjects of other arms control agreements, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). North Korea has

joined the first two of these agreements, but not the third. Nevertheless, there is still great concern that North Korea is not fully abiding by the NPT and BWC, and possesses significant quantities of NBC weapons that could overcome any balance in conventional weapons.

North Korea must be encouraged to abide by its responsibilities in the NPT and in the BWC. It should also be encouraged to join the CWC. Until the ROK and the United States are certain that North Korea has significantly reduced NBC threats, they must prepare to defend their forces and civilians from the use of NBC weapons. Such defenses include both protection from the effects of NBC weapons and offensive capabilities to destroy NBC weapons and to retaliate for their use. The U.S. Defense Department is more thoroughly analyzing these force requirements.<sup>12</sup>

## ARMS CONTROL POTENTIALS: ASSESSING THE EXISTING FORCES

Arms control of any form in Korea must begin with the existing forces. There is, however, no source of information on existing military forces that is accepted by both the ROK and North Korea. To the contrary, for logical military reasons, North Korea carries out an active deception and denial program to prevent the ROK and the United States from gaining information on its forces. Therefore, this section first examines available information on ROK and North Korean military forces from a ROK perspective, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. While the focus of this chapter is on conventional arms control, the range of military forces is examined, recognizing that forces beyond the conventional forces affect the overall military capabilities, and that conventional arms control must therefore be undertaken in the context of these overall military capabilities.

## Quantitative Comparisons.

Table 1 provides a quantitative comparison of many of the kinds of North Korean and ROK conventional forces, as contained in the ROK *Defense White Paper, 1999*. It highlights the major differences, including the much larger North Korean Army and Air Force manpower;<sup>13</sup> more North Korean tanks, artillery, surface combatants, submarines, and fighter aircraft; and more numerous North Korean reserve troops (despite the North Korean total population being half that of the ROK). This table does not capture the qualitative differences between North Korean and ROK forces, to be addressed below.

Table 1 does not include U.S. forces deployed in the ROK. ROK and U.S. forces plan to defend the ROK together under their Combined Forces Command (CFC). Table 2 provides a rough summary of the U.S. forces. Two of the three maneuver brigades of the 2nd Infantry Division are in the ROK, along with a large number of supporting personnel, and the ground force equipment associated with that division. The U.S. Air Force deploys several squadrons of fighters in Korea. These U.S. forces would need to be combined with ROK forces in developing a conventional arms control agreement with North Korea.

Table 1 also does not include WMD or ballistic and other missiles. Missiles and other delivery systems for WMD tend to be dual-capable (i.e., they carry both conventional and WMD munitions), and thus potentially fit within the scope of conventional arms control. These capabilities are summarized in Table 3. Note that North Korea has large numbers of missiles that pose a considerable threat against the ROK, whereas the ROK generally lacks comparable forces. Moreover, North Korea has been and is working on weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons), and will continue to do so, whereas the ROK has tempered its efforts on WMD in part at the urging of the United States. Arguably, North Korea feels that it has offset its conventional qualitative disadvantages with its

Classification				ROK	North Korea
Troops				Army 560,000	1,000,000 <sup>2</sup>
				Navy <sup>1</sup> 67,000	60,000
				Air Force 63,000	110,000
				Total 690,000	1,170,000
Principal forces	Army	Unit	Corps	11	20
			Divisions	50 <sup>3</sup>	63 <sup>4</sup>
			Brigades <sup>5</sup>	18	113
		Equip- ment <sup>12</sup>	Tanks	2,250	3,800
			Armored Vehicles	2,300	2,300
			Field Artillery <sup>6</sup>	5,200	12,000
			Heli-copters	580	-
	Navy <sup>12</sup>	Surface combatants		170	430
		Support vessels		20	470 <sup>7</sup>
		Submarines/ Submersibles		10	90 <sup>8</sup>
		Aircraft		60	-
	Air Force <sup>12</sup>	Fighters		520	850
		Special aircraft		40	
		Support aircraft		220	840 <sup>9</sup>
Reserve troops <sup>12</sup>				3,040,000 <sup>10</sup>	7,450,000 <sup>11</sup>

1) Marine Corps included

2) Navy sniper brigades now under the Navy Command and Air Force Command

3) Marine Corps divisions included

4) One missile division included

5) Mobile and combat brigades such as infantry, mechanized infantry, tank, special warfare, patrol, marine, and assault brigades included; combat support brigades excluded

6) Field artillery includes rockets, guided weapons, and MRLs

7) Approximately 170 surface patrol boats of the Surface Patrol Boat Forces included

8) Some 40 *Sang-O*-class submersibles included

9) North Korean aircraft (helicopters) operated by the air force

10) Eighth-year reservists included

11) The Reserve Military Training Unit, Worker/Peasant Red Guards, Red Youth Guards, and social security agents included

12) Figures approximate

Table 1. Comparison of North Korean and ROK Military Forces.<sup>14</sup>

WMD deployments. Therefore, if WMD reductions will not be negotiated, the ROK and the United States should seek quantitative conventional force comparability.<sup>15</sup>

Type of Forces	U.S. Today
Manpower	36,130
Army, Marines	27,084
Navy	327
Air Force	8,719
Equipment	
Tanks	116
Other Armor	237
Artillery & MRLs	72
Fighter Aircraft	90

Sources: The Ministry of National Defense, The Republic of Korea, *Defense White Paper*, 1999, p. 33; Defense Department Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, website: <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmids/m05/hst1299.pdf>.

Table 2. U.S. Military Forces in the ROK.

Qualitative Comparisons.

Qualitative military factors include the age and technical performance of the military equipment, the training and capabilities of the military personnel, and the strength of the command/control system and its military planning. These factors can temper or totally change the quantitative comparisons presented above. For example, one current generation fighter like the ROK KF-16 may be able to engage and defeat several older fighters like the North Korean MIG-21s, though quantity can still prevail in some cases, especially early in a conflict.

Most North Korean military equipment was designed and manufactured decades ago (many items were designed in the 1950s). This equipment undoubtedly has maintenance and support problems. Indeed, given the decline of the North Korean economy, many wonder how well North Korea is able to support its military equipment.

Most (but not all) ROK military equipment is newer and more advanced, giving it clear qualitative advantages (as shown in the Yellow Sea battle in June 1999).<sup>16</sup> Some exceptions to these comparisons include North Korean long-range artillery, which has at least been manufactured in recent years, as have some smaller North Korea submarines (like the *Sang-O*), the North Korean version of the SA-16, and North Korean ballistic missiles.

Type of Forces	ROK Today	DPRK Threat Today	DPRK Threat 2010
Ballistic Missiles <sup>a</sup>			
0-199 km	12	200 - 600	100s?
200-999 km	0	400 - 1,200	700 - 1,650
1,000-2,999 km	0	100+	300 - 600
3,000+ km	0	0	75 - 125
Special weapons <sup>b</sup>			
Nuclear	0	A few?	2-20?
Biological	—	?	Tons?
Chemical	100s tons	2,500-5,000 tons	2,500-5,000 tons

<sup>a</sup>Sources: For ROK, International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1999-2000*, London, 1999, pp. 194-196, 311. For North Korea, Bruce Wm. Bennett, "The Emerging Ballistic Missile Threat: Global and Regional Ramifications." Note that this table does not include multiple rocket launchers, which are included in artillery in Table 1. The range of the ROK ballistic missiles (NKH-1/2s) is actually 250 kilometers.

<sup>b</sup>Sources: For ROK, "Seoul Admits to Chemical Weapons Stockpile," *South China Morning Post*, May 10, 2000. For North Korea, The Ministry of National Defense, The Republic of Korea, *Defense White Paper*, 1999, pp. 55-57, 84.

Table 3. Comparison of Other Korean Military Forces.

North Korea has had a checkered past with regard to military training. For larger units, most North Korean training is traditionally done during the winter training cycle, but little training went on in the winter of 1999. The winter of 1998 was a more robust training period (though less than historical patterns in some ways), and the training

in the winter of 2000 was also more robust. Before the winter 2000 training, it was often argued that the North Korean economic situation had caused North Korean training to decline considerably. Such a decline, in combination with maintenance and support difficulties, would have minimized the conventional threat posed by North Korean forces. However, the North Korean performance in the winter 2000 training was relatively impressive, suggesting that previous judgments have been premature.<sup>17</sup> ROK and U.S. forces carry out many regular training exercises each year, and have a training program superior to that of North Korea (having better economic resources).

Only modest information is available on the North Korean command/control system and military planning. While North Korean forces are expected to be dedicated and committed to a preplanned offensive operation, they would likely be far less prepared than ROK and U.S. forces to respond to combat uncertainties that invariably cause the conflict to diverge from the original plan. When the plan diverges, the ROK and U.S. cultural strengths in initiative and lower-level decisionmaking ought to give ROK and U.S. forces a considerable advantage over their North Korean counterparts.

#### Overall Force Comparison.

The combination of force quantity and quality and the likely circumstances of a future Korean conflict suggest that some forces are more capable than others of affecting conflict outcomes. From the perspective of both sides, these forces are thus a logical focus for conventional arms control. Table 4 combines the quantitative and qualitative factors discussed above with the standard ROK and U.S. perception of a future conflict, which proceeds through several phases.

Force	For DPRK	For CFC	Timing; Type of Impact on Campaign
DPRK standard artillery	+		Early; create holes in the defense, cause damage
DPRK long-range artillery	+		Early; threaten heavy forces, C <sup>4</sup> I, Seoul
DPRK infantry	+		During offensive; overwhelm defenders
DPRK heavy forces	+		During offensive; penetrate the defenses
DPRK SOF	+		Early; disrupt/impair CFC operations
DPRK ballistic missiles	+		During offensive; disrupt airfields, ports, C <sup>4</sup> I
ROK/U.S. (CFC) aircraft		+	Throughout; stop ground forces, destroy artillery, disrupt rear operations
ROK/U.S. (CFC) heavy forces		+	Throughout; stop DPRK offensive, support a counteroffensive
ROK/U.S. (CFC) artillery		+	Throughout; destroy artillery, stop ground forces
ROK/U.S. (CFC) navy		+	Throughout; stop SOF insertions, control SLOCs

Code: "+" indicates that this force could make a major difference for the side indicated.

Table 4. Conventional Forces Capable of Making a Difference in a Korean Campaign.

- North Korean Offensive, Early-Phase. During the first several days of a North Korean offensive, North Korean forces at the front will be seeking to create holes in the ROK/U.S. defenses, and then to exploit these holes in operational breakthroughs. North Korean standard artillery will have the primary role of creating holes (likely employing chemical weapons), North Korean infantry will seek to establish these holes in tactical breakthroughs, and North Korean heavy forces will seek to convert these into operational breakthroughs. North Korean forward area SOF will support these efforts. Meanwhile, North Korean long-range artillery will seek to damage ROK and U.S. heavy forces (the theater reserves that could plug holes in the defense), disrupt forward area C<sup>4</sup>I, and damage major command and control targets in the Seoul area. North Korean rear area SOF and ballistic missiles will seek to disrupt or impair ROK and U.S. air forces on their bases, port operations, transportation, and other activities in the rear area.



Most ROK and U.S. experts believe that North Korea will fail to adequately suppress CFC air bases, allowing ROK and U.S. air forces to devastate the North Korean ground forces (especially artillery and heavy forces). ROK and U.S. artillery will significantly add to the damage of the North Korean ground forces, and ROK and U.S. heavy forces will counterattack and destroy large elements of the North Korean ground forces within the first few weeks. Thus, North Korea will ultimately fail in its efforts, and in the process its artillery, heavy forces, and ballistic missile systems will be significantly damaged, as will be its means for inserting North Korean SOF (at the hands of the CFC ground, naval, and air forces). Nevertheless, considerable damage will be done to CFC forces in the process of such an offensive.

- North Korean Offensive, Mid- to Late-Phase. North Korean infantry and heavy forces will continue the North Korean offensive. North Korean ballistic missiles will continue to disrupt operations in the CFC rear areas. ROK and U.S. air forces, artillery, and heavy forces will continue to seriously damage the North Korean ground forces, until the North Korean progress is stopped. ROK and U.S. air forces will also attack other targets throughout the depth of North Korea.

- CFC Buildup Phase. About the time that the North Korean offensive ends, U.S. forces will be freely flowing into the ROK, protected by CFC naval and air forces. During the buildup, the CFC air forces will attack ground forces and other resources in the North, preparing for a counteroffensive.

- CFC Counteroffensive Phase. Once the U.S. and ROK build-up is complete, CFC heavy forces and artillery will press the counteroffensive, with CFC air forces providing support and removing other threats.

## Focuses for Arms Control Reductions.

Each of the forces identified in Table 4 is an appropriate focus for conventional arms control. Even if the ROK and U.S. expectation is that North Korean forces will be soundly defeated, there is some risk in any war, and considerable damage would be done to the ROK in the process, especially in the area of Seoul and further to the north. Thus reducing North Korean forces may help lower the chances of a war, reduce some risks, and decrease the damage the war could do.

## SOME SPECIFIC ARMS CONTROL OPTIONS

Conventional arms control pertains to the kinds of forces listed in Tables 1 and 2 and the missile systems listed in Table 3. As we have seen, arms control in Korea should begin by implementing confidence-building measures, and then move on to force reductions. This section recommends specific arms control options in each of these areas, and then presents an approach to implementing the force reductions.

### Confidence-building.

As argued above, the two Koreas need to begin by developing communication with and trust in each other at both a national and personal level. For military forces, confidence-building measures provide the opportunity to help generate such trust. Confidence-building can take a variety of forms. With regard to Korea, some specific options worth considering include the following.

*Communication.* The almost complete lack of communication between the two Korean militaries needs to end. While arms control discussions will allow some communication, these discussions will be inherently confrontational in nature. Therefore, a parallel, nonconfrontational set of activities needs to occur, even if sponsored only on a unilateral basis by the ROK (with U.S. support). For example, North Korean officers should be

invited to visit ROK military units as well as ROK and CFC military exercises. ROK military officers (especially senior officers) should be encouraged to establish communication with one or more counterparts in the North. The ROK should make available its literature on unclassified military issues to the North on a systematic basis (i.e., regular distribution). North Korean/ROK military conferences should be held to discuss military strategy and other issues. While these efforts could proceed unilaterally, there would need to be some North Korean/ROK agreements on these early in the process; otherwise, participating officers in North Korea might be accused of treason and removed from their positions.

*Hot Line.* A key form of communication needed between the North Korean and ROK militaries is a hot line. This line would connect the senior North Korean and ROK military leadership, and allow conversations in particular when crises develop. Hopefully, such conversations would diffuse such crises. North Korea has previously proposed establishing such a hot line,<sup>18</sup> suggesting that this may be relatively easy to implement. Indeed, in the June 2000 North Korean/ROK Summit, the two sides agreed to work on a hot line.<sup>19</sup>

*Exercise Monitoring.* The monitoring of exercises was set up between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the 1980s, and proved to be a helpful confidence-building measure. It also provided for communication between the two sides, in itself desirable. Monitoring of any exercise above ground force regiment level seems appropriate, which would mean any exercise involving more than about 2,500 personnel (alternatively, a division-level threshold could be considered of 10,000 or so personnel).<sup>20</sup> This would clearly include the North Korean winter training cycle, and a number of annual ROK and U.S. exercises. Exercise monitors would be responsible for observing and reporting on exercises, and would seek to assure that any transition from an exercise to combat preparation was rapidly

reported. Several aspects of this proposal are being discussed in the aftermath of the June 2000 Summit.<sup>21</sup>

*Artillery Pull-Back.* As noted above, most of the North Korean artillery around the DMZ is located in offensive positions within a few kilometers of the DMZ. Some of the ROK artillery is also located closer than 10 kilometers from the DMZ. It would be best to pull these artillery units out of range from the opposing artillery into truly defensive positions, making it more difficult for either side to begin offensive operations. A 10-kilometer artillery-free zone should be established on each side of the DMZ, placing the opposing artillery no closer than 24 kilometers from each other (the four kilometers of the DMZ plus ten kilometers without artillery on either side of the DMZ).

*DMZ "Cold Zone."* As an extension of the artillery pull-back, it would be ideal to create a DMZ "Cold Zone," an area of 10 to 20 kilometers on each side of the DMZ where forces are generally not allowed out of barracks, except for a few, disconnected small-unit exercises each year.<sup>22</sup> The units in this area would be paired at the division level, North and South, and a council setup for each division pair. Both sides would be expected to do what they can to improve life on the other side and provide mutual support. For example, each side could end its propaganda broadcasts,<sup>23</sup> and, where needed, provide the other side (the ROK to North Korea) with power, food, medicines, and other needed commodities. The division commanders of each paired division would meet in a council at least monthly to review the needs and determine how to fill them. Such an approach recognizes that even the North Korean military is suffering from humanitarian limitations; by providing North Korean forces with humanitarian needs, ROK forces will have the opportunity to establish communication and begin creating an environment of reconciliation between the North Korean and ROK militaries.

*Accepting the Risks.* During the conference at which this chapter was first presented as a conference paper, several

discussants commented that there are risks associated with some of these confidence-building measures. For example, allowing North Korean observers at ROK and U.S. exercises might help the North Korean military better understand ROK and U.S. vulnerabilities, and learn how to copy ROK and U.S. strengths. Alternatively, there will also be opportunities to display ROK and U.S. strengths which the North Korean leadership likely does not appreciate, hopefully enhancing deterrence.<sup>24</sup> Decisions about how far to proceed with confidence-building measures, and eventually on force reductions, must be a function of the ROK and U.S. assumptions on when major changes could occur in the North. If a North Korean collapse or negotiated unification is quite possible within the next decade or so, ROK and North Korean forces need to prepare for these changes by pursuing conventional arms control. But if some form of unification is unlikely for many decades to come, ROK and U.S. forces should be conservative and maximize defensive capabilities over the coming years.

### Force Reductions.

It may take many years of confidence-building efforts before the North Korean and ROK militaries are prepared to discuss military force reductions on a reasonable basis. Whenever that time comes, each side will need to be prepared to discuss alternative means for achieving reductions. Given the principles discussed above, the military requirements for combined Korean forces post-unification become a useful target toward which arms control efforts ought to be directed. As with the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) agreement, the two sides should seek to reduce their forces to equal ceilings. Both sides would have to determine the precise forces that they require and the ceilings they are willing to employ; this section suggests some *sample numbers* that might be considered. Adjustments around these numbers are certainly possible, and need to be evaluated.

On the ROK side, most of the force reductions would have to come in the ROK ground forces (Army and Marines). Looking at these forces in somewhat more detail, Table 5 summarizes this author’s approximation of a possible Korean ground force structure after unification, very much reduced from existing forces to facilitate modernization and to reduce overall defense expenditures. This force structure would create five corps of relatively heavy forces, plus another corps of cadre divisions to cover the Chinese border. Many of the divisions would be heavy divisions with high mobility to cover the much expanded territory of Korea, giving Korea more tanks and other armor vehicles than the ROK currently has.

Type of Ground Force	Number	Active Duty Personnel	Tanks	Other Armor	Artillery & MRLs
Active divisions	17	185,000	1,600	3,500	2,000
Reserve divisions	13	45,000	500	—	1,200
Regular corps	6	90,000	400	300	800
Other	—	80,000	—	—	—
Total		400,000	2,500	3,800	4,000

Table 5. Sample Korean Ground Force Structure, Post-Unification.

Table 6 uses this possible future Korean force structure as the basis for recommending force reductions. The unification goal for ROK forces has been added to a modestly reduced U.S. force size to reach proposed force ceilings under arms control. For example, we add 25,000 U.S. ground forces (a modest reduction in current U.S. forces) to the 400,000 Korean ground forces (Army and Marines) proposed for unification to arrive at a proposed arms control ceiling of 425,000. This approach is based on the previously noted anticipation that only a modest number of North Korean military forces would be retained in the long term after unification.<sup>25</sup> Total U.S. manpower might be limited to 34,000 or so within these ceilings. In contrast, the post-unification Korean military might retain a significant

number of North Korean weapon systems, especially tanks and other armor. Therefore, the proposed arms control ceiling for tanks is a little more than half of the unification force requirements (a ceiling of 1,600 allowing for 3,100 total ROK and North Korean systems to be retained besides the 100 U.S. tanks). Artillery, MRLs, and fighter aircraft are handled more like personnel because many of the North Korean weapon systems appear to be qualitatively inferior, and thus unlikely for retention after unification.

Type of Ground Force	Unification Goal	U.S. Today	ROK Today	DPRK (NK) Today	Proposed Ceiling
Manpower					
Ground	400,000	27,084	585,000	1,000,000	425,000
Air Force	60,000	8,719	63,000	110,000	68,000
Navy	40,000	327	42,000	60,000	40,000
Tanks	2,500	116	2,250	3,800	1,600
Other Armor	3,800	237	2,300	2,300	2,100
Artillery & MRLs	4,000	72	5,200	12,000	4,100
Fighter Aircraft	500	90	560	850	500
Ballistic missiles	200	—	12	700-1,900	200

Table 6. A Basis for Negotiated Force Reductions.

In addition to the ceilings shown in Table 6, some other force limitations may need to be part of the force reductions. Because special forces are of particular concern, they should be limited in numbers to no more than 8 to 10 percent of the ground force structure on each side. Thus, North Korean special forces are reported to constitute 100,000 of their current 1,000,000 ground force personnel (10 percent);<sup>26</sup> with a ceiling of 425,000 North Korean ground force personnel, the special forces would need to be reduced to no more than 42,500 (34,000 if 8 percent is used).

North Korea will be concerned about U.S. force deployments to Korea or the area around it. North Korea would be particularly opposed to U.S. deployments to support an offensive against the North. Since the United States is not interested in carrying out such an offensive in

peacetime, the United States would likely accept peacetime deployment limitations, but then would want these limits removed if North Korea commits an act of war against the ROK. For North Korea to accept such limitations, a major threshold would have to exist between peacetime and wartime deployment rules. Two alternatives are possibilities. First, U.S. deployments to Korea could be limited until the United States Congress declares a state of war against North Korea. Congress is very unlikely to declare war against North Korea for offensive purposes, thus meeting the North Korean objective. In response to a true North Korean attack on the ROK, such a resolution hopefully could be obtained promptly although the process would slow deployments somewhat. Second, the alternative threshold could depend upon some international organization determining when U.S. deployments would be authorized, though such an approach would further delay U.S. deployments in defense of the ROK, and thus be unacceptable to the ROK and United States.

North Korea would likely want constraints on two kinds of U.S. military deployments into or around Korea. The first would be deployments of U.S. ground, air, and support forces onto the peninsula. Within reason, these deployments could be limited to the levels that typically occur in major CFC exercises; for example, the United States could not have more than 44,000 military personnel in the ROK (the 34,000 day-to-day ceiling mentioned above plus a 10,000 training augmentation). The expansion from the 34,000 to 44,000 would be allowed for only 8 weeks or so each year. The second deployment limitation would involve U.S. naval forces around Korea. The United States could commit to keeping no more than one carrier battle group and one amphibious ready group within 1,000 kilometers of the North Korean coastline, which would extend to cover the Sea of Japan, the Yellow Sea, and the northern part of the East China Sea. This exclusion zone would not reach as far south as Okinawa. These deployment limitations would reassure North Korea that the force reductions it makes to



reach the ceilings proposed above will not leave it vulnerable to U.S. coercion in peacetime.

Note that all of the numbers in this section are examples of the reductions that could be used. To formulate actual arms control proposals, North Korea, the ROK, and the United States would need to decide whether these illustrative numbers are reasonable and if not, what alternatives would be appropriate.

### The Mechanisms for Force Reductions.

For force reductions even to be considered by the two Koreas, a considerable degree of trust and communication needs to be generated on both sides. Confidence-building measures will help achieve this objective. Nevertheless, the procedures actually used to achieve force reductions will be critical. The following sequence of procedures is recommended.

First, both sides must agree to a list of existing forces from which reductions would be negotiated. This list needs to be specific, with a designation of the units at each location, with their manpower and combat equipment (for example, the 6<sup>th</sup> tank battalion at location X has 410 personnel and 31 tanks). An organizational hierarchy will also be needed so that divisions and corps can be clearly identified. Because of North Korean reluctance to discuss such issues, the ROK/U.S. will need to develop a proposed listing for both sides, with some DPRK units perhaps listed at unidentified locations, or the relationships between some units shown as “not known.”<sup>27</sup> This process may need to be undertaken by area, with the first effort devoted to the area around the DMZ to facilitate discussion of the DMZ “Cold Zone” notion and the artillery pull-back. This effort should begin as soon as possible, and should be a part of the confidence-building measures early in the arms control agreements.

As part of this process, some counting rules need to be developed. These include what personnel and equipment categories should be used for reductions (the ones shown in Table 6 being an initial proposal), and what personnel and equipment should be aggregated into each category. For example, does a T-34 count as a "tank" or an "other armor vehicle"? In addition, what equipment should be counted? For example, in many units, especially air force fighter squadrons, it is typical to talk of total aircraft inventory versus primary aircraft inventory (the difference usually being spare aircraft for maintenance purposes). To avoid confusion, the arms control discussions should deal with total aircraft inventory and total equipment in other categories, including the maintenance spares (even if the spare aircraft are not functional and are used entirely as a source of spare parts).<sup>28</sup> If this were not agreeable, the alternative counting rule would use primary aircraft inventory and allow a maximum addition of 10 or 15 percent for maintenance spares.

Second, both sides must agree to an inspection effort to verify the force lists that are developed. These verification inspections should begin immediately (not waiting for arms reductions), and should involve at least 2 percent of the forces each month (thus taking no more than about 4 years to achieve full verification). In addition to verifying the unit information, these inspections should involve a determination of humanitarian needs (as discussed in connection with the DMZ "Cold Zone"), with the ROK/U.S. making follow-up visits (not verification inspections) to deliver needed aid. For ground forces, this process should start in the DMZ "Cold Zone" and then spread back to forces beyond. Note that this process would also be an important confidence-building measure, with both sides encouraged to act in ways that generate trust (e.g., no movement of personnel or equipment before inspections).

Third, both sides need to agree to the principles for reduction. As argued above, the preferred alternative is that used in the CFE negotiations, i.e., reduction to equal

ceilings. The next best alternative would be a percentage reduction in the existing force. Either of these alternatives requires an accurate accounting of the North Korean forces in the first two steps. At the same time, the ROK/United States must determine how far they can reduce. From a ROK perspective, this means that the ceilings on forces cannot reduce forces to the point where the defense loses its coherence (serious analysis must be done on the requirements of a coherent defense, given the likely North Korean threat). Since one objective of arms control is to reduce in the direction of forces required after unification, forces should not be reduced below appropriate ceilings as suggested in Table 6 and confirmed by ROK and U.S. analysis. From a U.S. perspective, reductions should not be beyond the threshold that will continue to sustain deterrence in Korea, nor below the level and types of U.S. forces desired post-unification.

Fourth, both sides should consider limiting munitions. For example, artillery rounds could be limited to 1,000 or so per tube, adequate for a defensive operation but not for an offensive operation. This would reduce the fear of both sides relative to offensives. For munitions limitations to work, a comprehensive inventory of munitions and their locations would need to be created, although this would be difficult to verify if all locations have not been reported. Since these locations are unlikely to be fully known in the North, rules of thumb would need to be developed to assist in locating supplies. For example, how many rounds per tube need to be forward at the start of a campaign, and within what distance (or distances) from the batteries? If appropriate storage sites cannot be found for each battery, then a challenge would need to be lodged to determine the storage site location. Examination of storage sites would confirm quantities of the munitions stored there, but would also be useful in determining the status of the munitions stored there. If some munitions show qualitative deterioration, this would be useful information, and would also lead to a good basis for recommending future reductions.

Fifth, the reduction process should begin. Because some of the reductions recommended in Table 6 are massive, they should be done in phases as shown in Table 7 (the third phase is the proposed ceiling). For example, to go from one million to 425,000 ground forces, North Korea would reduce about 200,000 in each phase. Because it would take a substantial time to find jobs for the personnel reduced, these phases should occur at something like 1-year intervals. The ROK side will undoubtedly need to work with North Korea to help develop civilian jobs for those North Korean military personnel released from military service. Phases like these allow each side to verify the opposing side's reductions before going too far in the reduction process.

Type of Ground Force	Side	Number Today	First Phase	Second Phase	Proposed Ceiling
Ground force personnel	U.S.	27,084	26,500	25,500	25,000
	ROK	585,000	523,000	461,000	400,000
	DPRK	1,000,000	808,000	617,000	425,000
Air Force personnel	U.S.	8,719	8,500	8,200	8,000
	ROK	63,000	62,000	61,000	60,000
	DPRK	110,000	96,000	82,000	68,000
Navy personnel	U.S.	327	320	310	00
	ROK	42,000	41,200	40,400	39,700
	DPRK	60,000	53,000	47,000	40,000
Tanks	U.S.	116	110	105	100
	ROK	2,250	2,000	1,750	1,500
	DPRK	3,800	3,100	2,300	1,600
Other Armor	U.S.	237	225	210	200
	ROK	2,300	2,170	2,040	1,900
	DPRK	2,300	2,230	2,170	2,100
Artillery & MRLs	U.S.	72	72	72	72
	ROK	5,200	4,800	4,400	4,000
	DPRK	12,000	9,300	6,700	4,100
Fighter Aircraft	U.S.	90	90	90	90
	ROK	560	510	450	400
	DPRK	850	730	620	500
Ballistic missiles	U.S.	0	0	0	0
	ROK	12	200	200	200
	DPRK	1,000?	730	460	200

Table 7. Proposed Phasing of Force Reductions.

As force reductions are made, excess (and in particular, outdated) equipment needs to be destroyed. The process of destruction needs to be clearly defined for different classes

of equipment along with the means for verifying destruction. Some equipment that will be reduced will need to be replaced with alternative equipment of the same type. Thus, rather than reducing two battalions from 31 to 15 T-55 tanks each, it may be better to completely eliminate the T-55s of one battalion and replace them with 15 or so more modern (e.g., T-62) tanks. Thus, reductions need to be planned at the unit level, using basic principles accepted by both sides. Realignments also need to be planned and agreed to in advance by all.

For verification, observers should be placed in units on the opposing side both to facilitate communication and to confirm the reductions. Force and supply levels should be closely monitored and equipment destruction confirmed to make sure functionality is lost. The equipment should be followed from storage locations to destruction locations. Inspectors should examine the storage location after destruction to make sure the force has been appropriately reduced, or that any realignments (e.g., 15 T-62s replacing 31 T-55s) are done within the agreed parameters. For personnel reductions, reductions will be difficult to verify (many military forces could be moved to comparable police forces or quasi-military forces). To reduce the feasibility of such cheating, where possible the manpower in each unit should be reduced by some amount rather than whole units being cut.<sup>29</sup> This procedure might work best even if these units are made cadre forces into which reserves could be moved to bring them back to full strength. The reserves would be less ready than active forces, and they would have to be removed from existing reserve units to become part of the cadre units.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS

The DPRK and the ROK must yet negotiate the conventional arms control process proposed herein. The

numbers used here are approximations for illustrative purposes; the Koreans may choose their own ceilings.

The Korean Summit created considerable euphoria concerning the movement toward unification in Korea. Many would now argue that unification of some form could occur within the next decade or so. If that is the case, conventional arms control is needed in Korea *now*. The risks to unification of not reducing the military forces of North Korea and the ROK are far greater than the risks to current defenses implied by pursuing conventional arms control. The confidence-building part of the process should help to develop understanding and trust on the two sides, reducing the chances for war and helping prepare the conditions needed for unification. The force reductions proposed should also lower the likelihood of war, facilitate force modernization by both Koreas, reduce military costs, reduce the damage that could occur as a result of a war or conflict associated with North Korean collapse, and transition military personnel to economically productive roles where they would be less likely to threaten the unification process. All of these are important goals for a Korea seeking peaceful unification; indeed, peaceful unification may not be possible without such efforts.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 9

1. This chapter was presented to a conference on "Competitive Strategies: Planning for a Peaceful Korea," held June 12-14, 2000. The conference was sponsored by The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, the U.S. Army War College's Department of National Security and Strategy, and the U.S. Air Force Institute for National Strategic Studies. It was modified after the conference to clarify some points and add some additional issues. It reflects the views of the author, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of RAND or its research sponsors.

2. "South Korean state television said yesterday that Seoul and Washington have a plan to topple the North Korean government if the Stalinist state attacks the South. The Korean Broadcasting System said that rather than simply driving back the North's troops, the plan provides for a counteroffensive to seize Pyongyang and try to topple the

government of Kim Il Sung." "KBS reports plan to topple Kim Il Sung," *Washington Times*, March 25, 1994, p. 16. In 1994, the South Korean president, Kim Young-sam, said: "Once a major military confrontation occurs, North Korea will definitely be annihilated." Ranan R. Lurie, "In a Confrontation, 'North Korea Will Definitely Be Annihilated,'" *Los Angeles Times* (Washington Edition), March 24, 1994, p. 11.

3. *Defense White Paper*, The Ministry of National Defense, The Republic of Korea, p. 244. This table lacks information on the North Korean GNP in more recent years, and thus 1997 data is used in the text.

4. Hee-Mook Chae, "Budget for 2000 set at W92.6 Trillion," *Korea Times*, September 21, 1999; "2000 Defense Budget Shows 5 Pct Increase," *Korea Times*, September 21, 1999.

5. "Defense Ministry to Reduce Military Force," *Korea Herald*, August 20, 1999; "Armed Forces to Be Trimmed to 400,000-500,000 by 2015," *Korea Times*, August 19, 1999.

6. These actions will likely fail if they are not preplanned. Ad hoc efforts to demilitarize the North Korean military could well result in rebellion in the initial areas selected, and lead to more extensive and prepared rebellion in the rest of the North Korean forces. At least some North Korean military leaders will feel that maintaining their weapons and control of forces will give them the best chance of survival.

7. "Korean Unification Will Cost Up to \$3.6 trillion, Report Says," *Korea Herald*, April 22, 2000; available at [http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/news/2000/04/\\_05/20000422\\_0539.htm](http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/news/2000/04/_05/20000422_0539.htm).

8. "Defense Ministry to Reduce Military Force," *Korea Herald*, August 20, 1999; "Armed Forces to Be Trimmed to 400,000-500,000 by 2015," *Korea Times*, August 19, 1999.

9. Some experts argue that a draft is essential to keep military forces "democratized," and that the transition to an all-volunteer force would narrow the parts of society represented in the military. However, some of the dire predictions have not come true within the U.S. military under an all-volunteer force. Nevertheless, the German discussions of reducing their military manpower to the level where a draft would be largely unneeded typify the kinds of concerns that might also occur in Korea. See, for example, Roger Boyes, "Germans Shocked By Plan To Replace Conscription With Professional Army," *London Times*, May 9, 2000.

10. North Korea will likely prefer proportional force reductions, where both sides reduce forces, for example, by 25 percent, allowing North Korea to maintain quantitative force size advantages. Such reductions would not achieve many of the objectives outlined above. As a variant of both options, the proposals below recommend force reductions to equal numbers, but doing so in phases, where a fraction of the total reduction is implemented in each phase. In this way, the North would retain at least some of its numerical advantages during the first phases of reduction.

11. The growth of North Korean military manpower is plotted in Figure 1 in Bruce W. Bennett, "Implications of Proliferation of New Weapons on Regional Security," *The Search for Peace and Security in Northeast Asia Toward the 21st Century*, conference paper, meeting of The Council on Korea-U.S. Security Studies on October 24-25, 1996.

12. Recent work on defense against CBW within the United States Defense Department has led to the concept of "joint, standardized templates." These templates define the requirements for CBW defense at each kind of military facility and for each kind of military force. They are also intended to provide overall guidance for both offensive requirements and concepts of operation in any given region. These templates are being developed.

13. A key difference not shown in this chart is the size of the North Korean special forces command, generally reported at around 100,000 personnel.

14. This table, including the footnotes, is copied from *Defense White Paper, 1999*, The Ministry of National Defense, The Republic of Korea, p. 245.

15. This is especially true since the ROK is destroying its chemical weapon inventory in accord with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. See "Seoul Admits to Chemical Weapons Stockpile," *South China Morning Post*, May 10, 2000.

16. See, for example, Won-Sop Yi, "After West Sea Conflict," *Seoul Hangyore* (translated into English by FBIS), June 22, 1999.

17. Jim Mann, "N. Korea's Ability to Sustain Military Surprises the U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 2000.

18. Democratic People's Republic of Korea, "On Easing the Tensions on the Korean Peninsula and Creating a Peaceful Climate for National



Reunification," Press Release of the Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, June 2, 1990.

19. "Military Hot Line May Link to NK," *Chosun Ilbo* (Electronic, English Version), June 22, 2000.

20. Historical exercises should be examined to determine the best personnel thresholds. In general, a lower threshold would allow for more monitoring, resulting in more communication and interactions, something that is needed.

21. Yong-Won Yoo, "Defense Ministry to Redefine North Korea's Military," *Chosun Ilbo* (Electronic, English Version), June 19, 2000.

MND is considering other post-summit meeting measures such as giving North Korea advanced notice of military exercises, including Ulchi Focus Lense. Also, the ministry is looking into conducting mutual exchange of military officials. . . . The ministry is to consider . . . inviting North Korean military observers to various annual military exercises held in South Korea.

22. Such provisions would reduce the potential for misinterpreting the training efforts of the other side, thus reducing the chances of war.

23. After writing this proposal, the author learned that both sides stopped their "provocative" broadcasts along the DMZ in preparation for the inter-Korean summit of June 12-14, 2000. They have done so to create a more conciliatory environment. See Soo-Jeong Lee, "NK Halts Anti-Seoul Broadcasts Ahead of Summit," *Korea Times*, May 30, 2000, p. 2. It is unclear whether this cessation is to be temporary or permanent; if only temporary, the issue needs to be raised again as part of arms control, and the precedent cited for creating a conciliatory environment.

24. For example, North Korea likely does not appreciate the lethality of air-delivered anti-armor weapons like sensor-fuzed weapons (SFW). A flight of 2 to 4 aircraft carrying these weapons could fly over a simulated armor battalion in an exercise and potentially devastate that battalion. Such a demonstration would likely chill any North Korean hope for a successful offensive against CFC.

25. As noted above, during a transition period for unification of perhaps a year or more, much of a reduced North Korean military would likely need to be retained in uniform to help stabilize the civilian population in the North, establish and sustain law and order, and

control the flow of refugees. To perform these functions, North Korean personnel would not require heavy weapons.

26. *Defense White Paper, 1999*, The Ministry of National Defense, The Republic of Korea, p. 51.

27. The completed force lists need to address total personnel, and thus need to include personnel on overseas assignments, headquarters personnel, personnel in training, and so forth.

28. Aircraft, including outdated aircraft in storage, would be excluded from total aircraft inventory only if the aircraft are totally disabled, or if both sides agree that some aircraft should not count.

29. If the number of divisions, wings, and so forth remains the same, many of the flag officer positions would not have to be eliminated, potentially reducing the objections of the North Korean military.

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### Commissioned Research Presentations

Stephen Bradner, "North Korea's Strategy."

Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., and Sharon A. Richardson, "The North Korean View of the Development and Production of Strategic Weapons Systems."

Jack Rendler, "The Last Worst Place on Earth: Human Rights in North Korea."

Eric A. McVadon, "China's Goals and Strategies for the Korean Peninsula."

Larry M. Wortzel, "China's Goals and Strategies for the Korean Peninsula: A Critical Assessment."

Victor D. Cha, "Japan's Grand Strategy on the Korean Peninsula: Optimistic Realism."

Marcus Noland, "Economic Alternatives for Unification."

Bruce William Bennett, "Conventional Arms Control In Korea: A Lever for Peace?"

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